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1927

JUST A-VERSE-A-DAY

By D.G.B.



Class PS3503

Book I26J8

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JUST A-VERSE-A-DAY

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JUST A-VERSE-A-DAY

By D. G. B.

(These verses are reprinted by request.)

This Song of Mine.

This song of mine
May have no new illumination fine,
No crisp, original fresh turn of
phrase,
No quaint as-yet-uncaught new
imagery which may amaze
The staid conservatives.
But I would breathe here if I may
In some new fashion—or the old,
old way—
A sentiment that lives,
A vital something which some heart
somewhere
May hear and, hearing, find it quite
Encouraging—and like the gentle
call at night
Of comrade who assures that he is
nigh
With sympathy and love and friend-
ship high.
If just one sigh
Shall be supplanted by a smile
This song of mine will be worth
while!

For You!

I.

I have written this verse for YOU
today—
For you who may never see these
lines;
I write them as if in the devious
way
Of our lives we may meet; and who
will say
We may know each other by cer-
tain signs.

II.

I have written to voice from this
heart of mine
A love that can follow the whole
race through—
A love for each heart with a hope
divine,
A love that is born of no selfish
design—
So I am writing this verse today
for—YOU!

ANSWERS

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D. G. Bickens

JUST A-VERSE-A-DAY

BY D. G. B. *ichers*

FIRST PRINTING

1927



PRESS OF
THE J. W. BURKE COMPANY
MACON, GEORGIA

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1927

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BY D. G. BICKERS.

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“D. G. B.”---AN INTRODUCTION



IT is wholly outside the scope of a collection such as this to provide an essay on the history, structure and development of verse. My mission is simply to commend the work of the author to discriminating lovers of rhyme and meter, and to introduce a friend of over thirty years to a select coterie, who may have been denied the bounty of a personal association. To do so, is a pleasure and a privilege; for it has been my observation throughout this period, that if there is a jealous bone in his body, it is an anomaly; or, if he has an adventitious sign of dissimulation or enmity in his nature, no diagnostician has been able to discover it.

Were an apology needed for the appearance of this, his first volume, it would be found in the fact that he has sung his songs to the people, of Georgia particularly, for more than a quarter of a century, coupled with the insistence on the part of those to whom he has given, day in and out, the best that is in him—his lilting lines of love, of faith, of devotion to an ideal, of confidence in the good of humanity, of modest humility, of infectious optimism, and an unswerving and unwavering fidelity to the cause of the Creator—to put the choicest of his vast collection in permanent form.

This he has done under the suggestively attractive caption, JUST A-VERSE-A-DAY, in which he has opened his heart and displayed his soul to prince and pauper, to peasant and king, for the sake of the singing. He has fought a good fight, he has kept the faith, he has renounced pessimism, and he has lived to see his dream become a truth, which is even sweeter

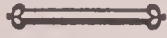
“D. G. B.”—AN INTRODUCTION—*Concluded*

than the dream. He has written much that will survive, and in the unborn years there will be many who will walk in pleasant pastures, beside still waters and reflect that “D. G. B.”, poet-laureate of the press of his adopted state, was not only spiritually minded but the friend of man, and the apostle of the home.

RALPH METHVEN THOMSON.

Savannah, Ga., December 1, 1927.

THE FIRST LINE



THIS collection of verses is the answer to many requests for some of the daily bits appearing in the Savannah Morning News, the Macon Daily Telegraph, the Athens Banner, and some other papers of this state and other states for a number of years. They do not make pretense to being the finest poetry; I think they bear little of pretense of any sort. As they first appeared, some of the representatives of several thousand that have been published—most of them simply for the day's casual reading—some groups of several kinds are offered in the hope that they may be pleasing and helpful in some little way to some who read them. The writer has taken a few minutes out of each busy day for thirty busy years to sing, because singing is good spiritual exercise. I enjoy trying to sing; you may like to put your own music to these pieces.

D. G. BICKERS.

Savannah, Ga., Dec. 1, 1927.

DANIEL GARNETT BICKERS



BY VIRGINIA F. CULLEN

THAT contemporary poetry in the South has been enriched by the verses of D. G. Bickers as contained in this, his first published volume, is perhaps attributable to the author's vocation in life, though it may be said to be in spite of it, for his vocation is that of the newspaper man, first and last; for a long time a news-gatherer and news-dispenser, and for some years a steady editorial writer. His avocation is the little feature of "verse and vignette". But the avocation has not been ignored for sake of loyalty to the vocation. The spontaneity of poetic feeling, the impetus to all true poetry, has soared beyond the rule and type of office routine and found expression in many heartening bits of song that he has recorded for the newspapers of Georgia, since his majority, thirty years ago. At times they may have been "mere memoranda set down to keep them from getting away into the Silence again", as he once expressed it; rough ashlar that he has always meant to cut and polish one day and put into more sedate form for those who have waited so long for them, but through them all can be glimpsed the heart of the "great lover"—just as Rupert Brooke loved "things" and "cups clean-gleaming".

However, the requests for a collection of his daily verses tacitly demand that they be submitted as each was first published in his "Good Morning To You" and his "Just A-Verse-a-Day" greetings,—in the same charming, simple raiment that inspired the requests over a period of many years. As such they are now presented. The making of them was his

recreation and refreshment, he says; rhythmic thoughts bursting forth in a moment of introspection to give surcease from the monotony of the daily grind; little intimate things born under the typewriter keys and spirited away without changes to the waiting maw of the linotype.

"D. G. B." (the South knows him best in this abbreviated name-form) is a newspaper man instinctively, preferably, providentially. That his daily duties in the newspaper office (he has not been absent from his desk when he should have been on duty, but two days, in twenty years) have permitted the shadowy touch of his favorite Muse to crystallize into poetic form his innate love for the beautiful in life, is this volume's best plea for genuineness and personal sincerity. Invariably there is found a strain of pure and high sentiment running through his poems, not indefinitely and obscurely shadowed, but animating bright images and clear conceits.

By his own confession, this perennial poet launched his newspaper career in the country printing office of the Gainesville (Ga.) Eagle, while completing his high school work, "to learn the trade of a printer." In his own words: "I was promised nothing for the first two weeks; and was paid \$2.50 wages at the end of the first week," which he explains by saying that high school training made him a better "hand" than the foreman had thought to find. With the Gainesville country papers, the Eagle, the Industrial News, the Georgia Cracker, which he leased from the late H. W. J. Ham, a nationally popular platform orator of his day—and the Herald, which he helped to organize, he worked until he was mature, becoming in that time correspondent for the morning papers of the state, the Atlanta Constitution, the Macon Telegraph, the Savannah Morning News, the Augusta Chronicle and others. He was active correspondent for morning papers for twenty-five years.

As a cub reporter on the Atlanta Journal, at the same time corresponding for the Macon Telegraph, he began his first "columns" of verse, paragraph and jest, for those papers; for the Telegraph he has been upon the editorial page with a daily verse and vignette for over thirty years, with few times off. For ten years he has been associate editor of the Savannah Morning News, going to Savannah from Athens, where he was managing editor for ten years of the Athens Banner and "did" daily verse and features "on the side". The Savannah and Macon morning papers have featured the "Just A-Verse-a-Day" for years.

Mr. Bickers explains his own advent: "Born sometime after the panic of '73 and in time for the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, but too young to appreciate that big show; birthplace,—Farmville, Prince Edward County, Virginia. Father,—Garnett Ross Bickers, a merchant, originally from Orange county, Virginia; mother, a daughter of the late James D. Crawley, Prospect, Virginia, a farmer, teacher and for forty years a local preacher, serving Methodist churches in his county and other counties, gratis. Education, received from my mother, who is still daily teaching (in her eightieth year), until she fitted me for college."

In a paragraph we have his birth, parentage and hereditary instincts. The D. G. Bickers of the press today,—the farmer's friend, the advocate of all schools and teachers, a man whose poems reveal clearly a defined spiritual strain, remembers his childhood days in Virginia; but he came to Georgia when ten years old, so Georgia claims him as her poet. On August 26, 1927, the Georgia Press Association, on its annual trip into the mountain country, paused at Gainesville, the present home of his mother, and by unanimous vote, proclaimed him Poet-Laureate of the press of the state.

In the years that followed his first fling at newspapering,

the verses he has contributed from time to time to the Georgia and national press have come back to him with many an interesting tale gathered while wandering in strange lands. The stories of some of the eleven thousand "children" began with the first informal publication, "Ninety-Six", a brochure, entirely self- and hand-made in a Christmas holiday week, a greeting to the new year, with a calendar for each month, and facing each calendar-page a poem appropriate to the period of the twelvemonth. The greeting to the year was:

I know not how I'll like you, Stranger,
I know not what you'll bring to me—
Perhaps you'll whisper low of danger,
Perchance you'll gaily sing to me.

I dare not pry into your treasures—
You'll have both work and rest for me;
You must have pain, you may have pleasures—
I know you'll bring what's best for me.

In this collection, a typical one of the poems is that to "October":

Once on a time, for thus the legend goes,
Dame Nature fell asleep. In deep repose,
All clothed in richest robes of summer green,
She slumbered, when there crept, unheard, unseen,
A silent painter, mischievous and more,
Whose magic, mystic brush swept softly o'er
The garment green that hid the sleeping dame;
And from the brush there quickly flowing came
The brightest tints, exquisitely combined,
The scarlet and the orange intertwined,

With all the iris colors mixed about,
And not a lively, lovely hue left out.
So when the drowsy dame at length awoke
And rubbed her eyes, she doubting, wond'ring, spoke—
And asked (recalling dreamily a kiss!)
“I'd really like to know whose dress is this!”

“THE Printer's Proof of 'The Piece-Makers' ”, published some time later, was the story of a young newspaper man, in which his college days, his newspaper career and his love affairs were told in reproductions of ostensible clippings from half a hundred or more daily and weekly papers of Georgia, real Georgia newspapers. This was his first copyright production, published from Athens, Ga. The following poem is taken from that story. It has been set to music and printed as a lyric love song, by Hunter M. Perkinson:

I would not have you pledge me, dear,
That in the years ago
Your heart ne'er stirred
From other word
Than that of mine alone;
I do not care whom once you loved, nor when,
nor how—
It is enough for me to know you love *me* now.

I would not have you pledge me, dear,
To love me thus for aye,
And swear your vast,
Wild love will last
Forever and a day;
I would not force from lips I love a formal vow—
It is enough for me to know you love me *now*.

THE World War period elicited many strong expressions in verse. A khaki-bound booklet, in the fall of 1917, suggested by daily prayer services held in many American cities for the Cause, was entitled, "A Word With the Commander". It drew an expression of hearty, sympathetic, personal appreciation from President Wilson in an autographed letter to the author. A typical verse of that collection is given here, "A Prayer for Our Army":

Oh, Lord of Hosts, who guidest destiny of nations from afar,
Who nervest soldiers unto battle, turnest tides of war,
We do not pray that Thou wouldst be with us, that Thou
Wouldst go with them that fight for us and teach them how
To overcome the enemy; we do not plead with Thee this day
To be with us, and them, upon our side! It is a better way
In which we come to Thee: We pray, with rev'rence hushed
To deep solemnity, with arrogance and selfishness now crushed
In penitence for past remissnesses, that we ourselves may be
In harmony with all Thy plan, in full accord with Thee—
Not that Thou wouldst now condescend with us in battle to
abide,
But that in righteous war indeed *we* may be found upon *Thy*
side!

ONE year "D. G. B." prepared a decorative calendar for the home, from the home, and of the home. On the cover was a picture of the home of the Georgia sweetheart of John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home"—Miss Mary Harden, of Athens, Ga. There were twelve serious verses on phases of the home, home life, and home relations. The title of the following, from that collection, is: "Two Cannot Make a Home:"

One cannot build a home; two can; but they can only build
it! Soon

There comes to both of them the tugging at the heart,
That wistful longing, undefined, persistent, for that better
part

Of home-life. They may build the home but cannot keep the
boon

Of happiness too selfishly. Directly there are whispered low
The sacred secrets; over them a hush of sweet expectancy
enthralls

Their hours. . . . Then, on a day, in tense anxieties that grow
Too sharp to last, the angels come and leave a bit of heaven
there,

A living pledge of human immortality; and over Her there
falls

The sanctity, the mystery of Motherhood. . . . A book of
revelations rare

Begins to open to them, hour by hour; the greatest, newest fact
Is learned: That only in their attitude toward Life in this
Wee, mutual expression of their love is that perfected bliss
Which only mothers, fathers, know. . . . The home, to be
complete, intact

For times ahead, must have its very institution sanctified
And consecrated by the touch of baby fingers. Then, indeed,
Does growth begin for Him, for Her—more rapidly do they
Develop than this tiny Possibility from day to day;
Then do they measure up most unbelievably to every need
This growing little problem, care, delight, this hope and guide,
Presents. . . . Then in this opportunity to be, to do, to act
In years to come, by proxy, to achieve and realize the dream

Which never can come true to them, they reach the heights
supreme
Of willing, eager sacrifice; they love and work and give
Their lives unto and for this Child—and learn thus how to
live.

ANOTHER holiday season Mr. Bickers “annotated” the old Webster’s Blue Back Spelling Book, known to past generations, inserting a score or more of verses here and there, marking relative pages and passages, and following the old school trick of “now turn to page twenty-three” as children followed that custom years ago. This was one of the “inserts”:

You know that spelling’s very like the rest
Of life. You take the best
Of spellers and they’re born, not made; and yet
Attention, diligence and study always get
Results in learning how to spell. . . .
Another thing I’ve noticed well:
The hard words frequently become
The easiest, and some
Small common words the hardest to write—right!
For instance “erysipelas”, “caoutchouc” and “catarrh”—
They never bother me, because I know they are
More difficult than usual, and so
I learned them well and know
Them now; but simple little fellows, plain
And commonplace and everyday in use—they are my main
Impediments in writing: “Neice” and “seperate”
And “recommend” and “bouy”. . . I’ll state
The big mistakes in life we make are those
In little things of ordinary course, experience shows.

WHEN the Georgia Press Association was on a New York sea trip a few years ago, Memorial Day was observed off Hatteras—on a Sunday—at sea, perhaps the first time that day had been celebrated under such circumstances. On the breakfast plate of each passenger on the City of Chattanooga that morning was placed a bound brochure, in Confederate blue and in silver title, containing a dozen sonnets upon monumental memorial themes, written by D. G. Bickers as his response to an assignment on the program. The first sonnet was, “This Day, a Monument:”

In time shall crumble unto dust the stone
No matter how enduring, how secure
It may appear; it will not quite inure
To age-defying hardness; time alone
Can claim the strongest elements his own;
Time's triumph may be slow, but it is sure,
Despite the specious promise to endure—
All matter bows to Time in weakness prone.

We make of Time, the master, servant now,
And from the calendar we choose a day,
Set up this space of time which will not bow
Nor will forever yield unto decay,
Among the days, immortal in intent,
We make this Day their lasting monument.

WHAT I have always considered one of the poet's most exquisite poems was his unintentional contribution to “Wayside Flowers”. An interesting story is attached to that. A Georgia woman sent a gift to a friend in Boston, a parcel wrapped in the editorial page of a Georgia newspaper. Some time later another Georgia woman received a booklet containing verses gathered by a Boston friend. She found in

the collection one by D. G. Bickers which, she later learned, had been clipped from the discarded wrapping of the parcel sent from Georgia to Massachusetts, and added to the New Englander's collection of verses. The poem is entitled: "Her Best:"

A poet wrote in a tender strain,
And this was the simple, sweet refrain:
"There's many a woman, east and west,
Must be in the sunshine to look her best."

Aye, poet fair, you have seen the flush
Kindled by sun-kiss full to the blush,
You saw the sheen of the golden hair
When sunbeams brushed its tresses fair.

You thought but of hearts that are gay and light,
You saw these only—that made you write:
"There's never a woman, east nor west,
But must be in the sunshine to look her best."

But, oh! I have seen when the shadows fell,
When sorrow assailed that no tongue might tell,
Faces still fairer for lives storm-swept,
And tenderer eyes for the tears they wept.

And spirits more beautiful I have known
For the cloud that was carelessly over them thrown;
The touch of a gentler hand I knew—
The softer for pain it had trembled through.

So I know some hearts that are better far
For the lack of the sunshine, and there are
Some women who suffer, east and west,
Who only in shadows can show their best.

ANOTHER friend, in London on a visit, selecting remembrance gift-books to send home, found a handsome little volume of the "Quiet Hour" series, hundreds of thousands of which were published during the war period. In this booklet she discovered to her delight one from a Georgia friend she knew well, "D. G. B." It follows:

I knew a man who, in his avaricious grasp,
Had tried to gain both yonder world and this,
A life of ease on earth and heav'nly bliss—
And lost them both, for both slipped through his clasp.

I knew another who, with single purpose true,
Surrendered hold upon the things of sense
And lodged his treasure in the endless hence—
Thus, winning yonder world, gained this one, too.

AND the one following has been everywhere. It was written in 1898, has been copied and re-copied. It lost its signature, took on strange initials at times, and finally came home to roost recently when the author, introduced to a school audience for an address, heard his own words quoted by the introducer, with no one present aware that he had written them when hardly more than a lad:

You gave on the way a pleasant smile
And thought no more about it;
It cheered a life that was sad the while
That might have been dark without it;
And so for the smile and its fruitage fair
You'll reap a crown sometime—somewhere.

You spoke one morning a cheering word
And passed to other duties;

It warmed a heart, new promise stirred,
And painted a day with beauties;
And so for that word and its silent prayer
You'll reap a palm sometime—somewhere.

You lent a hand to a fallen one,
A lift in kindness given;
It saved a soul that was almost done
And helped a heart toward heaven;
And thus for the aid you proffered there
You'll reap a joy sometime—somewhere.

DURING the past year when a volume of gathered and selected verses about the late President Wilson was prepared by a Brooklyn librarian, the following poem which appeared in the Georgia newspapers on the morning following Mr. Wilson's death, was included, the same compiler later selecting verses from Mr. Bickers' writings for a volume on Armistice Day and one on Robert E. Lee, and another, a Southern anthologist, recently called for a dozen representative verses from the Georgia writer for a collection in process of compilation. The Wilson poem is:

One day the world will wonder why
All men, all groups, did not commit to him
Full leadership. . . . He was so high
The brightness of his way made other ways seem dim.
Forgetting self, and scorning all the cheap
Expediencies time-servants know, his will could keep
The star of future ages clear—may it increase!—
As he will now, who gave his life—to Peace!

Some time the world will wonder how
His greater plan (by all the little schemes

Of selfish, willful men who now
Are blind to the sublimity of finer dreams)
Was for a time obscured, distorted so
That it was lost. One day the world will come to know
Its leader of the ages; when the noise shall cease,
And quiet reign—know him who gave his life—for Peace!

SEVERAL poems of the Georgia writer have been “read” into the Congressional Record, in speeches by congress members. One of them:

There was a time when nations came to be
Because they were locked in from sea to sea,
Because they lay between great mountain ranges high,
Because a people spoke one language commonly,
Because they claimed one common worship-creed,
Because they were of but one race, one breed,
Because some Institution held them true—
The church, the army, or the union through
Peculiar mode of living, government; but none
Of these things counts, when all is said and done.
For perpetuity in any nation's life there needs must be
A greater element, a purpose grounded in real unity;
There must be, underneath and over all, that strong,
True, vital principle, Unselfishness, which lives
For service to the race; which grows because it—Gives!

PERHAPS the first poem to be written after the Spanish-American War is the following, celebrating the declaration of peace. It was written within the half-hour after the news reached the Atlanta Journal, and was on the street in

a special edition in less than another half hour. Kipling's "Recessional" form was purposely adopted:

Lord God of Peace at last—at last—
Thy pitying ear hath heard
Above the roar and battle's blast
And boom of cannon firing fast
The mother's piteous word
From harrowed hearts, the stifled cry
Of sorrowed homes, the sob and sigh
By keenest anguish stirred,
Lord God of Peace, Thou heardst on high!

Lord God of Peace, at last—at last—
Thy face is toward us turned,
And through the war-cloud flying past,
And through the shadows melting fast,
Thy smile is yet discerned;
And o'er the ashen Eastern skies
We see Thy bow of promise rise,
And through the dark we learned,
Lord God of Peace, Thy priceless prize.

Lord God of Peace, at last—at last—
Thy still, small voice is heard
Above the battle's booming blast
And roar of cannon firing fast:
"Be still!" the welcome word
Hath soothed the troubled, surging seas,
Hath lulled the tempest-winds to ease,
And calmed the passions stirred—
Lord God of Peace, we bend our knees!

Lord God of Peace, at last—at last—
Thine everlasting arm
Is bared; we see in periled past
Thy providence—Thou ever hast
In even war's alarm
Had still Thine ends of justice meet
To compass—these are now complete;
Shield us from further harm,
Lord God of Peace, Thy reign we greet!

WHEN the World War ended, the poem below was featured in the Savannah Morning News in a special edition on the streets between midnight and dawn—November 11, 1918. It had been written the night before and put into type for use the moment the signing of the Armistice should be announced:

Yonder the red torch flames. Anarchy bids for the power—
Bids, and may seize the reins for transient hour. . . .
But here, upon the field, war-seamed and drenched with blood
Of one hot, fierce quadrennium of struggle, It is signed—
Signed 'mid the scenes of super-war! Through trench and
mud
And smoke and crashing boom of battle came the messengers
behind
The white flag of defeat, the emissaries sent to sue
For truce, preliminary now to peace; sent by the same
Authority directing all the armies which have through
The months pressed ruthlessly to crush in blood and flame
The opposition to Autocracy! The Absolute surrenders there
To the supreme commander of the Allied hosts which leaped
To Freedom's call for all humanity; accepts the terms, the
bare,

Humiliating terms the victor names; says: "We have reaped
 The whirlwind for the voice of one ambitious, impious king—
 We were his partners in the crime against the Race, we bow
 Here for the lash, the chastisement severe and merited; the
 Evil Thing
 Escaped for just the hour—He shall pay sometime, some-
 how!"

IN anticipation, too, of what seemed sure to happen, the following had been written for the regular feature-space occupied by the "Just A-Verse-a-Day" contribution in the Macon Telegraph and Savannah Morning News and other papers:

He dreamed of world dominion—more:
 Himself he fitted for a rule that would embrace
 All nations, hardening his heart, and bore
 In fiendish patience all the agony but to efface
 The remnant of his conscience; he shut out the light
 Of justice, fairness, sense of service and of right,
 Murdered the still small voice that might
 Have made him great, strangled the faint
 And feeble struggles of the good impulse, silenced
 the 'plaint
 Of wronged and wounded ones, and blasphemously
 dared
 Almighty God Himself! Unto himself alone
 He would have bent the world, nor shared
 He with Humanity one smallest right to own
 A place he envied. This was his sin supreme:
 A selfishness which shut all mankind out. . .
 There could be then no other ending of his dream—
 To be by all the world cast down to death, despair
 and doubt!

THE lines below, at least the first stanza of them, have been copied all over the United States in various type-forms and rarely with the hint that a young newspaper man, on a rainy day, in the old "Georgia Cracker" office, wrote them for a double purpose—to fill space devoid of news and to remind some delinquent of his arrears. It has been copied with other names attached, it has been transposed and for spice has been used with every "s" turned into a "\$". It is still going, after thirty years, and helping to dun negligent subscribers:

How dear to our hearts is the old silver dollar
When some kind subscriber presents it to view,
The liberty-head without necktie or collar
And all the strange signs that to us seem so new;
The wide-spreading eagle, the arrows below it,
The stars and the words with the dear things they tell—
The coin of our fathers, we're glad that we know it,
And sometime or other, 'twill come in right well:
The spread-eagle dollar,
The star-spangled dollar,
The old silver dollar
Will come in right well.

And how dear to our hearts is the old paper dollar,
When thoughtful delinquents present it to view—
The photograph on it, the symbols which follow,
The general appearance which seems strangely new;
The dollar-marks plain and the figures beside 'em,
The color, the words, and the good things they tell,
The promise to pay—all the creases can't hide 'em—
Should we sight one more dollar we'd know it quite well:
The old tattered dollar,
The green-greasy dollar,

That old paper dollar—
We'd know it quite well.

Or, how dear to our hearts is the little gold dollar
Whenever it chances to come to our view,
The smallness of size, and the rich golden yellow,
To us it is novel of all that is new;
So long has it been since we captured one of 'em
We've forgot how they look and we scarcely can tell—
Be that as it may, we are not going to scoff 'em,
But take in the gold with the other as well;
The miniature dollar,
The bright-yellow dollar,
The tiny gold dollar—
We'll take it as well.

ONE day the Savannah Morning News city editor played a trick upon the author. The latter had found on the pavement a broken-off leg of a china doll; for intra-office consumption he had placed the found article upon the city editor's desk, with, for his information alone, the lines below—which the city editor sent to the composing room where they took the place of the regular Just A-Verse-a-Day feature:

Perhaps from habit I was keen to see
This on the sidewalk, plain as it could be—
An object in these days not over rare
(I did not know they carried now a "spare").
So if perchance you find a seeking dame
Looking for her extremity, her name
Leave with me—she's not in the best of shape
(Good form!) she must now have to rake and scrape
To get a living—on one side she's "short"—
With only partial means here for support.

IN sprightly moments and relaxation moods the author will indulge in verse gymnastic exercises. Inspection will reveal that the following bits are unusual. The first rhymes at both ends of the lines; the second rhymes at both ends of the line and then has an added rhyme recurring in the middle of lines:

I.

Dreary are the darksome days,
 Skies with gloom are shrouded,
Weary is the work always,
 Eyes with tears are clouded.

Brighter life will be sometime,
 Blue of skies be purer,
Lighter then will run the rhyme,
 True, our hopes, and surer!

II.

A gleam of a star above,
A dream from afar, and—love;
 So I possess
 The highest happiness,
For much like to bliss above
Is the touch of her kiss and—love.

The bright of the skies above,
The light of her eyes and—love;
 So I am blessed
 With riches rarest, best—
The bright of the blue above,
The sight of just you and—Love.

ONE day somebody asked Mr. Bickers why he broke the lines of some of the irregular—and some regular—verses with periods. This was his reply—hot off the Remington:

“ ”

Somebody asked the other day
 Why I
 Put rows of little dots, this way at nigh
 Or further intervals, irregular, uncertain, and
 Irrelevantly placed. You understand,
 That it's a part of license that I claim
 And there's no blame
 Attached to them. It might
 Be they were used to indicate a slight
 Hiatus, or for emphasis,
 Or simply to fill out a line, like this:
 With something that's at least
 Less harmful than some words. A poem pieced
 With periods ought to hold
 Attention from the old
 Keen curiosity aroused by pithless points! But, hist!
 Likewise and also, list!
 I'll slip you on the quiet now
 Exactly how
 I came to use them: Many times
 In writing rhymes
 You reach a place that's fine to stop
 And—don't; an ideal spot to lop
 The thing smack off—but cannot quite decide
 To end the misery just there,
 Just where
 The ending's good. And so,

I, to be fair and honest-like, you know,
 Set down the dots to show
 I knew there was a chance to quit
 But couldn't quite avail myself of it.
 For instance: Note
 The last two lines I wrote
 See?
 Gee!

ANOTHER inquirer asked the ever-worn question, "How do you write these verses?" And he gave the answer:

It's so easy when you're working by the reg'lar rule o' rote
 To compose these feature verses. Now the formula you'll
 note:

First, select the special measure for a special stated time,
 Choose the gen'ral style of rhythm and the latest thing in
 rhyme.

"Take a subject?" Oh, that doesn't really matter—when
 you've done

You can stick a heading on it, one of soberness or—fun.
 Having got the pitch to suit you so no syllables you'll miss
 You can draft a sort o' skeleton in telegraph like this:

"-----
 -----;

 -----."

Then having got thus started on the versifying lay,
 You just set down your final rhymes, built up about this way:

“ _____ delight
 _____ verse;
 _____ write
 _____ worse.”

Next, put initial words just where they'll hit—or skip or miss—

The stanza's then evolving in a way somewhat like this:

“I _____ delight
 To _____ verse;
 It's _____ write
 Good _____ worse.”

Then scatter little words along, about the middle, say,
 Until the product of your brain begins to look this way:

“I _____ I _____ delight
 To _____ a _____ verse;
 It's _____, seems _____ write
 Good _____ or _____ worse.”

And, finally, there's nothing left, to turn a quatrain neat,
 But fill the interstices and announce the thing complete:

“I think that I could just delight
 To pen a bit of verse;
 It's easy, seems to me, to write
 Good rhymes or even—worse.”

That's simply perfect by the rule for every measured bar,
 And perfectly, yes—simple, too; just do it: There you are!
 And if you're not averse to heads, you scratch your massive
 dome

And caption it with humor as you label it, “A Pome!”

IN semi-jesting manner he paid his tribute to those who depend upon the freak form, the radical stunt to get attention:

you probably notice
this
freaky skit because it is peculiar
-y pitched, because it
is unusual in look and freakish to extreme
extent, because 'tis
absolutely lawless as to meter, style and all—that
with independence of arrangement. . . . Yet
anybody can do this, or even. . . W
-orse, and not half—try

Anybody can attract attention by doing the unexpected
Thing—the more radically lawless, the more attention!
The public speaker can draw a crowd by turning summersaults
And disrobing himself as far as he dares—
And some there may be who will acclaim his unconventional
And eccentric conduct as—Original, expression of a New
Freedom!

But to accord one's way to rule
And law and tried conventionalities requires
A self-control learned in the school
Of patient, careful training; he who best aspires
To bear a message from the heart,
Unselfishly to serve, to mould, and guide, command—
Must be himself in finer part commanded, guided,
moulded. One must understand
License is dangerous—and yet
The easiest way; adapting conduct to design
Is difficult! One may forget
Toil is the cost and pain's the price of service fine!

ANOTHER day while demonstrating to friends the difference and the similarity of various forms, he produced the following—the same words arranged in three very different type forms:

I.

I did not passionately supplicate and yearn for inspiration fine; I had been counseled to be still and—wait! I watched in patient silence for a sign! Then, presently, the gray cloud turned to gold; a blossom burst upon the dead-drab rod; the banal breeze hummed anthems sweet and old; truth showed me beauty; back of truth was God.

II.

I did not passionately supplicate and yearn
For inspiration's vision fine; I had been counseled
To be still
And—wait! . . . I watched
In patient silence
For the Sign!
Then———
Presently,
The gray cloud turned
To gold; a blossom burst
Upon the dead-drab rod; the banal breeze
Hummed anthems
Sweet and old; truth showed me Beauty;
Back of Truth
Was—God!

III.

I did not passionately supplicate
And yearn for inspiration's vision fine;
I had been counseled to be still and—wait!
I watched in patient silence for the Sign!

Then, presently, the gray cloud turned to gold;
A blossom burst upon the dead-drab rod;
The banal breeze hummed anthems sweet and old;
Truth showed me Beauty; back of Truth was—*God!*

AT the 1927 meeting of the Georgia newspaper people in Eatonton, Putnam County, the birth-place of Joel Chandler Harris, he was asked by the Eatonton people for a poem for "Uncle Remus" night—and this was read effectively by Mrs. Frank Dennis:

Who is the one, this Georgia son
Whom now the world has just begun
Truly to love and appreciate?
A child with a heart immaculate,
A lad with a canny gift to learn,
A youth with a courage to work and earn
His way; and a Man with heart of gold
Who lived thro' his work these days of old
Where memory's signal fires burn.

Where was begun the work he's done,
That millions honor this Georgia son
And truly his life appreciate?
Here, next to nature, as nature's mate,
In the heart of the country, clean and sweet,
With the "creeters" and "varmint" about his feet—
Brer Rabbit, Brer Wolf, Brer Fox, Brer B'ar—
He knew what they said while "a-settin' dar,"
Their intimate stories, full, complete.

And who was the one, with the Georgia sun
Gilding his wool when the day was done,

Whom He borrowed from life of the olden day,
With wisdom and wit of the kindest way
To word in a language rich and quaint,
With never a smudge and never a taint,—
But old “Uncle Remus”, with smile as bright
As the gleam thro’ the dark of a star-kissed night—
Forever the “little boy’s” dusky saint!

What has he done, this Georgia son
Whom the millions now have just begun
Truly to love and appreciate?
He saved to the world ere it was too late
The character, lore and language true
Of a vanishing type of our brothers who
Were artless children of wonderful art,
Who labored and loved in a country’s heart—
He made them enduring for me and you!

TO another Georgia poet, Lanier—to whom, with Poe, Mr. Bickers pays his personal tribute as one of the two great American “real poets”, the author of this volume has sung—endeavoring to tune the words to some of the musical cadences of Lanier’s greatest work:

“Out of the hills of Habersham, down through the valleys
of Hall,”
He saw the sign of the One Divine, his ear caught a heavenly
call,
And all through the stretches of Georgia he followed the
prints of His feet,
On the homely hills, in the rippling rills—heard ever a har-
mony sweet;
In the rock-ribbed seams of Rabun’s Gap, in the gray Stone
Mountain high,

In the forest of pine he could trace design of the Master who
once passed by;
On the painted stone of the stream-bank where the red Chat-
tahoochee flows,
In the waving grain of the rolling plain, or here where the
Cherokee rose
In its modest mood offers reverence, he read God's message
clear,
And he set God's word to music, stirred all hearts that they,
too, might hear;
From the highland where Chickamauga rears to kiss the
clouds in the sky,
To the Tybee light where day and night the stately ships
sail by;
From the silent depths of the rugged earth with its treasure
hid below
To the cool, calm scene of savannas green—he followed, God's
truth to know;
From the skyland clear where old Yonah waits to welcome
the sun in air
To the marshes of Glynn—he has vested them in a glorious
radiance of prayer;
He could hear God's whisper in murmuring streams, see God
in the earth's full breast,
He could feel God's care for the marsh-hen where she trust-
ingly builded her nest;
And then with a deft translation he could 'prison the thought
divine,
So that songs he wrote held a heavenly note to interpret each
God-writ sign.

THE evening the news reached Savannah of the death of Frank L. Stanton, the lines below were penned. Mr. Stanton was for many years a close friend to Mr. Bickers whom he lovingly nicknamed, "Da-NI-el", as if "Daniel" were "denial". It is interesting to note when Joel Chandler Harris held the position on the Savannah paper now held by Mr. Bickers, Stanton began his newspaper career in the same office—coming from his native Carolina town to Savannah to begin working for himself. To Stanton, from an expression that was among the last words of the first poet-laureate of Georgia, Mr. Bickers wrote:

He wrote: "A little way. . .
 Until God's day." . . .
 And then God, list'ning, sent
 A messenger for him. . . He went! . . .
 He had been pure in heart,
 Guileless in thought, loyal to art—
 Yet artless in simplicity of life,
 And one apart
 From earth's unseemly strife. . . .
 Beauty and music and all loveliness,
 The light and help and hope that cheer and bless,
 The music and the harmony of love—
 These were the things of all his world, above
 The common dirt of earth. . . and so. . .
 When he was called, he had, indeed, "a little
 way to go."

MISS MILDRED RUTHERFORD, of Athens, was one of the admirers of the work he did while in Athens. Her encouragement and appreciation were inspiration to him. He has written several verses, on occasions, directly in tribute

to the work of this loyal Southern woman. It was while thinking of her work, doubtless, that he wrote the following, on "Woman, Historian:":

Men may write history—and make it. Women know it first.
They read the motives deep and hidden, best and worst,
Which prompt the action of the leader, Man. They read the
 signs
Before the man himself has formed the purpose, and they
 know the lines
Along which, secretly, Ambition tempts; they are the con-
 fidantes
Of smouldering hatreds; they intuitively can translate a
 glance,
A nod, a frown, a whitening face—and sense intrigue afar;
They know, before the declaration's made, the aims of lords
 of war—
These ladies, maids and mistresses, these mothers, sisters,
 wives,
Know all the covered springs of power in all the leading
 lives—
And never will true history be written till the cleaving pen
Of woman shall record the things she knows about a nation's
 men!

UPON the recent celebration of the seventieth birthday anniversary of Bishop Warren A. Candler, who was president of Emory College when Mr. Bickers was a student at Oxford, the following lines were written—a tribute to a life which had its effect upon thousands of men who are now in middle, active life over the South:

I cannot think of what the years, three score and ten,
 Have done to him; for, blow on blow,
 He has matched Time, day after day, a Man with men,
 And given it as good, I know,
 As ever it has sent; I do not see that wear
 And work have done more than to fit
 Him for still greater things—his heart will ever dare
 The service loving; he will quit
 Only when he shall be promoted! . . . But I try
 To count the mighty blows that he
 Has dealt this evil, that hypocrisy, this high
 And impious iniquity,
 The other low and stealthy error. . . Time has not
 Left marks upon him in its rage,
 But he, while others failed—their efforts nigh forgot—
 Has left his imprint on the Age!

ONE day a young school girl asked Mr. Bickers for a
 sentiment for her "memory book"—and watched him
 grind it out utterly impromptu:

You ask me if I will not write some verses for you; then
 Give me a subject, "Memories"? Pray, will you tell me when
 You reached the reminiscent age, to live but in the past,
 And feast on recollections sweet from out the shadowy, vast
 "Once-was"? The pink of youth is still upon your girlish
 cheek—

Ah, counterfeit's the serious mein with which you, dreaming,
 speak!

Now, twenty, thirty, forty years from now you may, indeed,
 Ask for a poem on "Memory"—for then your heart may need
 The dear old-bygone days of yore, and then you'll sit and
 sigh,
 You'll wish and dream them o'er and o'er beneath the sunset
 sky.

ON another day, the same city editor of the doll-leg incident, asked the associate editor for a special verse on the "William Goat." A reporter amended the motion by suggesting one on "The Kangaroo". In twenty minutes the double order was served up. "The William Goat and the Kangaroo":

Consider now the William Goat,
Bewhiskered, horned, complete,
Engarbed in goodly raiment, coat—
And sometimes pants; his feet
Are nimble, and his appetite
Is versatile, no doubt;
But while 'tis proudly held in sight
He has no tail to speak about.

Or, note the curious Kangaroo—
Appendage caudal's strong,
Quite big enough to make a few
Whole billy-goats go wrong;
And yet he does not proudly hold
His tail high up in air;
He keeps it low—he is not bold—
But, my! what deadly wallop's there!

And so from these ensamples I
Analogy have found:
In Billy's tiny tail held high
And Kangy's on the ground;
It's usually the man who's got
But little makes the show—
The fellow who can hit the spot
In modesty 's content to go!

I HAVE touched lightly upon the different types of verse which this "versatile verse-maker" has indulged in, as indicative of the shifting moods that envelop him during the days of his long newspaper confinement.

The volume proper contains other of his verses which have cropped out adown the years, arranged and classified by the author himself—a poem for each transient feeling, waiting for the leaves to be turned. In the words of Bryant, dedicated to the universal Poet:

“What witchery hangs upon this poet’s page!
What art is his the written spells to find
That sway from mood to mood the willing mind!”

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
JUST AMONG OURSELVES

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO JUST AMONG OURSELVES



ROUGH ASHLARS

These fragmentary things
The delving of the day occasionally brings
Up with the mass of product of my work—
They are unfinished and unpolished; for I
 cannot shirk
The pressing urge of other steady task.
One day, it may be, I shall ask
Time off to take these nuggets laid aside
And test them, cut them, finish, polish,
 if I may,
The best of them—perhaps they can abide
The better time and opportunity to make
Them fit for showing for their inner sake!

ENVOY!

I do not wish that song of mine be sung
By famous tongue;
I do not care that o'er my written page
A critic sage
Shall say: "Well done!" and pass
The penciled portion from my heart
To far posterity, for students, classic-trained,
To scan and con. . . . Be this my part:

I wish some simple song I write
Shall find its way
To cheer a life, and bear it hope and light
And brighter day!

THE CRITIC

In the Royal Academy. . . . array
Of fine old portraits by the masters. . . . On a day
When visitors were welcome, thither flocked
Eminent and expert tailors. . . viewed the frocked
And collared mighty peering from the canvass-
es. . . . I catch
One muttered echo: "Bah! the waistcoat but-
tons do not match!"

VERDICT

I.

One was inspired,
And sang out of his heart.
Passion divine had fired
His spirit; so he breathed his part
Unheeding—*for One to hear,*
One other heart to feel the thrill his own,
One other heart alone,
One heart, in spite of distance, near.

II.

Another, to a chosen few,
A company of critics, those who knew
The quality of song, made effort fine
Of voice, his best! . . . For they

Were to give by authoritative sign
Their praise—or condemnation—they must say
If he were worthy, and they must acclaim
His genius to fame.

III.

Unknown to either, then the Universal Ear,
The universal human heart, was near
To feel and hear.
That Audience Invisible at last
Upon the songs a final verdict passed.

THIS

When I have written this, these lines
Irregular, imperfect, blundering signs
To one who may chance understand,
What have I done? These words, written by hand,
In characters distinctive, or else typed in form
Of letters like the staple norm
Of any alphabet—what do they signify?
I will not answer what they are, or why. . .
New, strong, slight—nothings? They must be
Living forever now—they are small parts of Me!

MY WORDS

Oh, one day I shall know
How in a careless moment I
Said just a little nothing—and I knew
not why!—
And never dreamed that it was so
Just timed to hurt! One day

In some quite unexpected way
I shall discover what a keen,
Sharp cut it caused, a pain that lasted
through the years!

And then, perhaps—I hope it so!—
I may in fullness know
That still another casual word
Gave joy and hope, and warmly stirred
One whom I did not think had heard
It said. . . Some day—no matter their
intent—
I may discover what my words have really
meant!

TENANTS

Too many of us are but tenants who merely are tilling the soil
Of another; too many of us live in the houses of landlords,
and toil
For them, asking seed from their granaries, supplies from their
store;
When the year is all done we have naught but their portion—
no more.

Too many of us, so, in our thinking must borrow the seed
from some great,
Wealthy mind, which by ownership rightly can claim the
far-bounded estate;
It were better to own by our earnings a spot for a house of
our own,
And cultivate well just about us a patch we have purchased
alone.

THE IMAGIST

The pencil is his pen. . . .
Words are his pigments. . . And strong eyes
He has, and sharp. . . . He paints—among
 things as they are—
Things as they are. . . . in all
Their clashing—or harmonious—colors. . . .
And because
He makes them real,
He is the artist of exquisite cruelty. . . .
Others may please. . . but if he cannot thrill—
He shocks us with the truth!

COMPLEMENT

This bit of Me,
A fragment of my Thought—
Not a mere remnant, but an element of Soul
And Mind as one compelling Whole,
Is complementary—as every thought may be—
To the great heart and reason of the universe. . . .
I sought
A figure to reveal the fine
Analogy: A scrap of stone upon the pile
Of raw material for building by design
A temple fair, complete; and while
That bit of stone
Is but alone
The fragment of the vast, original, age-old, created
 mass
Of marble hid for aeons in the earth—
And while it matches yet the secret place

From which it came, its worth
Is measured by the gift and grace
Of fitness unto all the other stones assembled now
For the designed construction; how
Nigh-perfectly it may be complementary unto the
 others, great and small,
Here measures its completeness as a fragment. . .
 So with all
And each. . This bit of Me: Let it remain a frag-
 ment, it will pass;
A remnant, it will die; a complement, and it may
 give
Unto the Universe a newer power to live.

WORDWARE

For some of us whose wares are words
They may become so commonplace,
So trite and shop-worn they are stale—
Of life and freshness lack the grace.

Some of our samples may be seen,
Like merchandise that is displayed—
A ten-cent window's showy spread,
Or—jewels of the purest grade.

They do not mean so much, I fear,
To us who handle them alone,
Who handle them as stock in trade,
And claim but few to call our own.

Yet on occasion we repair
To secret rooms behind the lock
To choose for some especial use
A rare one from our private stock.

Or, better, when the flower-girl blind
Upon the street gives us a rose,
We kiss the petals, pass it on
To one we love. Rare words are those!

OWED

"You ask me why I am working away,"
Said a cheerful man I met
Who was singing and working the livelong day;
"Why, I owe the world a living," he'd say,
"And I'm trying to pay the debt."

And so he was doing his duty best,
Trying to give, not get,
Adding his measure of effort, lest
He'd soon be owing still more for rest;
He was trying to pay the debt.

And thus he has taught me a lesson true,
One I shall not forget:
The world owes me naught for my passing through,
But I owe the world my fare, I do!
Am I trying to pay my debt?

NOT "REQUIESCAT"

The joke will be on them, my friends who write,
"At rest" upon the slab of stone to mark the spot
Where they shall lay my worn-out body down.

Rid of its burden, then my soul in flight
Will have but just begun its work. For there is not
Attraction in a heavenful of idleness, and for my own
Still highest, fine desire, my faith has seen
An after-world of busier life than here, a free,
Fair chance to do the many things that keen
Ambition could not compass for the clog and load
Of earthly things. . . There is the endless, open road!

Engrave no line upon my tombstone—it were jest
To say of me, when I am gone: “At rest!”

AMEN!

I read the other day
In casual way
A list of the last-words of famous men. . .
And then—
They held an int'rest keen for me—
I thought: You see,
While I am not and never may be great, yet I
Must one day die;
What then may be
My last expression, whispered low,
Before I go?
This will it be: All life has been
A mystery, and I have seen
But through a glass so darkly oftentimes; but now
I know the reasons and the why and how
Of all God's dealings; as He holds my hand,
Sincerely I can murmur, “Now I understand!”

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
BY LIGHT OF THE HOME FIRE

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO BY LIGHT OF THE HOME FIRE



A MYSTERY

A baby looked at me—a baby, I should say,
Some nine months old—looked at me in a baby's
simple way!

Now, if a man, full grown, my equal in all wise,
Had looked at me with level eyes,
In understanding comradeship, in cold
Proposal of exchange; or, bold
In fair defiance—such encounter merely meant
The commonplace, the usual incident.

If charming woman's eyes looked into mine,
Shy in their modesty; or, giving sign
Of challenge, inquiry, or invitation—then
Barring a thrill, it is occasional experience given men.

Or if maturer age—the mother's softened gaze,
The father's steady counsel, gleaned of days
Of life in action; or the veteran's, wise
With offer of advice—I understand these eyes.

But I am stronger, and, too, strangely weaker, now;
Older—and younger in a moment—how,
I know not. . . For a baby, not yet grown to art,
Looked up into my face, and through my eyes, into
my very heart!

HOME: HEART

“Home is where the heart is,” so has said
One of old time. And I have read
Into and out of that fine sentiment
Another truth than that which first appears;
'Tis true that while the feet may roam
Unto the earth's-end, still at home
The heart remains, to all intent
Of love and loyalty. The hopes and fears,
The sacredness—they cluster round
That home-spot and they make it holy ground.

And this is true: Home is the source and origin
Of life; just as the heart within
Is vital, sending out its streams through all
The body, so the home pours forth a living stream
Into the nations and society. The call
Is now to keep that vital source so pure
That fountain clean, that ideal dream
Of yet a better race shall be fulfilled in part;
Home is not merely where the heart may be,
Home is supremely more, it seems to me,
Home is the Heart!

ON THE EVE

When you come back to me from out the shadow-land,
I shall be waiting, dear—and I shall understand!

And with you, Love serene will come, and then we two,
Seeing her Gift, shall know that Love is always true!

I WAIT A LITTLE WHILE

Sweetheart, one day—it may be soon, or distant, yet down
life's sweet way—

The Messenger will come for one of us. We both may not
go then

Together, hand in hand, each lending other strength to pray.

For once in all the years, one of us must into the Great

Unknown

Step tremblingly—alone!

There was a time, back in the selfish, thoughtless hours, when

I prayed that I might first be called; I could not bear

The piercing thought that I should be bereft

Of love and sympathy, your kiss, your hand-clasp, to be left

In loneliness a wanderer whose heart is buried where

His treasure lies in cold and pulseless earth; I could not think

How I could wait and suffer so!

But now, as nearer draws that Day, I know

I shall not fear so much the time, nor shrink

From what must be—and must be for the best; and if He

wills,

He who can never violate His love for us, I willingly shall

wait

While you, dear heart, go first—oh, just a little way ahead;

I still shall pray—I cannot spare you long. . . . The hills

Fade, toward the sunset; and I stand

Just in the edge of that mysterious land,

As one who listens for the call of mate to mate. . .

You cannot suffer grief—be mine the dread,

Keen parting anguish if it needs must be; may you be spared—

I suffer gladly for your sake! . . And then,

While I am waiting for that little space, I know that when

You go into His presence, in your purity prepared

To meet Him unabashed, your heart will turn, swift as love's
thought, to me—
Your loving intercession then will be
My guaranty and passport into Paradise, your welcome not
the least
Of happiness in Heaven for me, as you shall come
In radiant beauty, now supernally increased,
Your kiss upon my lips to let me know at last that I am—
Home!

"BEHOLD THY MOTHER"

"Woman, behold thy son!" He said. To her He spoke as
unto one
Who typified the universal Woman. It has been
Thus since the race began. The little mother of the world
has seen
In every man—the babe, the lusty youth, the aged—each,
Her Son,
The fruit and sacrifice of love she spent, a vital part
Of her—flesh of her flesh, heart-blood of her very heart,
What she has been, and is, and what she longs to be
She sees and plans and dreams of—in his future; she,
This little mother of the world, Maternity Incarnate, lives
Forever in Her Son—the type of man—to whom she gives
Her life, here and hereafter. . . through eternity!

Then to the man He spoke, to him who had been nigh
To Him, who had interpreted His heart, and said: "Behold
Thy Mother!" In this man He saw the type of high
Development of manhood, fine, and pure as tested gold.
Not to the man but unto *Man* He spoke: "In Her behold
thy mother;" she,

Not Mary—*Mother*, the incarnate one, Maternity—
She gave man being; she, before he was, gave of her life for
him;
She gave herself to him; she held him 'neath her heart; in dim,
Uncertain hopes at first, she planned for him a shining way;
She suffered, toiled, wept, and braved the unknown dangers
of the day
And nameless fears of night.

. . . . Behold, oh, Man, in her,
In Woman, wheresoever she may be, The Mother! If she
were
Less than all that the race would bankrupt be, and sure decay
Would seize us; paupers we should go before the Highest
Arbiter!

"GIVE THEM MY LOVE"

"Give them my love." So mother's letter closed;
She spoke thus, meaning her grandchildren, my
Own girls and boys. . . I have supposed
She meant, down in her heart of hearts, that I
Should do far more than merely tell them how
She loves them, pass the pencil portion of her heart
On to these children. . . Thinking now,
Just what her love has been for me, to me, a part
Of all my life, I think she gently purposed I
Should give the same deep love that to her children she
Has giv'n—and that is why
Each day and all day-long I try—
Aye, through the night—to be
True to my children as she was to me!

COMPLIMENT

"She's like her mother," someone said
About a little girl I know. Her head
Went just a little higher, and her eyes
Told she was pleased and proud to hear
That said of her. . Ah, how I prize
That tribute, too—and still I fear
I cannot say which made me prouder then
To hear it said or gladly notice when
'Twas said, how she, delighted, claimed
The honor and the privilege. . . . For I
Could not have through the listings named
A finer thing! . . . No wish of mine
Could be for her so high and fine
As this: That she shall more and more
Like to her mother come to be—
May it be said, repeated o'er and o'er,
"Your mother, dear, in You I see!"

THE INTERPRETER

There is no man, however crude,
Unpolished, rude,
Prosaic, practical and plain,
Who has not, hid away
Down in his heart, a song his very own,
One he has authored by himself alone.
The big world may
Have never heard it. . . There is One,
A woman, loving him, who knows
Its words and music, how it goes
In all its variations, grave to gay.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

I have known comradeships between
Father and son—stronger was never seen!
I have seen mother and daughter bound
By ties of intimacy—ne'er was found
A lovelier sight! And I have known
Mother and son in fine devotion grown
Into companionship so beautiful and true
'Twas inspiration. . . . Once I knew
Another comradeship more rarely seen,
A perfect fellowship between
Father and Daughter; and in this, I know,
Accord more exquisite and delicate; for so
She tuned her heart to every mood he felt,
In sympathy with her his heart could melt—
Yielding and strengthening, together they
Made perfect union through a perfect day.

ON A BIRTHDAY

Above her head the years are passing, yet—
She minds them not; the number of them she may quite forget;
She has no time to pause and bow and grieve—and wait
For them to touch her; even Time is much too late
To leave his tokens on her life.
She has had more to do than merely count the days
And note their outer clash and strife;
In peaceful, pleasant ways
She has been quite too busy to grow old!
Has she not treasures to be kept—more precious, aye, than
gold:
Her house, her flowers and her Home? And still above
Even these priceless treasures, too, an all-embracing love!

PROMOTION

Dear heart, some morning when I go away
To meet the duties of the day,
To bear its burdens, learn its lessons, I
May not come back to you. And you will wonder why!

If I should not return, you will remember this:
That I pressed on your lips with parting kiss
A secret: I am on probation here,
In training for a work that will endure;
I am in school, where best endeavor is the mere
Preparing for the calling high. . . .

Know this: If I come not then back to you
I have been tried and tested and found fit
For that commission great, and it
Has found me ready. So, the Master, sure
That I am worthy, would now have me do
Service supreme. . . . Come, then, and be
Again the inspiration and reward for me!

TWO LIVES FOR ONE

Twice she has lived for me. Once long ago
She lived in spite of agony and pain and all
The dread and suffering, that I might know
Existence. To that courage fine and brave
Of Her I owe the fact that now I am. The call
Was close; she answered it . . . Then thro' long
 years she gave
Her life, day at a time, an hour, then another—
So unstintingly in sacrifice, my Mother!

A LEGACY

I do not care just what the world at large shall estimate
My life to be, if it shall count me rich, if it shall rate
Me great; this is my one ambition, my one wish to be:
“He was a Gentleman!” I’d like my son one day to say of me.

I do not care if I’m left out of future “Who is Who”—
The big world may not, after all, quite know just what I do;
I’d have those who may know me best my finest virtues see;
And “He was such a gentle Man!” I’d have my daughters say
of me!

MY MOTHER’S SON

Help me to keep in mind today I am my mother’s son!
She gave me life; so help me, Lord, to live—
Live so that when my race is run,
Live so that when my task is done,
I may have something for her love to give—
Help me to keep in mind alway: “I am my mother’s son!”

COMPLETE

“How much, dear, do you love me?”
I asked my baby girl one day,
When all the skies above me
Were bright—to hear what she would say.

A moment then she pondered;
She bowed her head, each curling lock
A question, as she wondered:
“I love you all around the clock!”

FATHER TO SON!

I am making my last will and testament. . . .
I am intent
That it shall be
Sincere, the heart of me! . . . And I devise
That otherwise,
My son shall have to hold
His father's fond ambition bold—
And unattained; that he shall see
The visions once vouchsafed to me,
And then,
Man among other conquering men,
Shall reach the goal I did not reach, attain
The realized and finished dream I could not gain!

WHAT WE MEAN

I talk a lot to her, I know,
Sometimes almost the whole day through.
Then as to sleep at night we go,
I sum it all in "I love you!"

She tells me lots and heaps of things,
Of what she's done and means to do,
Then, tired of talking, ah! she sings;
The sweet refrain is: "I love you!"

But if we neither one should say
A word for hours and hours, we two,
Both then would understand the way
We always mean just, "I love you!"

THREE PICTURES

Have you, tucked secretly and sacredly away,
A picture of your mother, as she seemed to you
The very first time ever, in a baby-day,
You can remember her? Have you a true,
Later, heart-mental image of her when
You saw her last? Nobody else has them, for they
Are yours and yours alone. Then,
Oh, have you thought it through:
Why that last likeness was not like the first? . . .

And now

Can you think—softly, tenderly! just how
She will appear when next you see
Her face—how beautiful then she will be?

SHADOW-SHELTERED

I looked for Love along the highway bright
And in the streets resplendent with the light,
Amid the busy throngs that came and went—
And found her not . . . Nor was I then content.

I called for Love where music filled the air,
Where laughter rang and joy was debonair;
But no one heard me of that happy throng,
My call trailed out in echo of the song.

And then I took the lonely path that wound
Along a mem'ry-way, by hallowed ground,
And in the silent shadows I could see
One sitting . . . There Love waited, true, for
me.

GIRL AND FLOWERS

Did you never notice, now,
Upon the screen or stage or in real life, just how
A girl lifts from its carton with a care
A bunch of roses, beauties fragrant, rare
In exquisite attraction—how she holds
The cluster like a burden precious, folds
The topmost buds then to her lips,
Adores them, kisses them, and murmurs in
Their pearly petal-ears sweet nothings, slips
The bunch of sweetness in the hollow of her arm
As if to shield it from the chance of harm—
And then, involuntarily, as if 't had been
Maternal habit from the days of Eden to this day,
Begins to rock it, nestled near her breast—
For all the world as older women have a way
Of picking up from where it lay
And fondling gently as they may,
A Baby . . . The reason you have guessed!

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

“Where are the children?” . . . She,
A visitor, inquired as she paused briefly at the door,
Expectant, pained then and—accusing. . . . He
Looked then at Her—at her who bore
With him the burden of the home. Their glances
fell—
They had no word to say to Love, no list of chil-
dren’s names to tell!

“Where are the children?” . . . At another door
Love stood—and saw upon the floor

The toys discarded. . . 'Twas the servant then
Who made reply, "Some there, some yonder," . . no,
 she knew not when
They would return. . . Mother? Away!
Father? Not home since yesterday.

"Where are the children?" . . . So Love asked again—
This time from her accustomed place
Within the home—for there she lived! Now when
She asked, it was in tender and habitual solicitude . . .
And as she spoke, the face
Of one appeared—a grown-up son—and following
Trooped happy, bright grandchildren, noisy brood,
And many of them. . . Softly to herself hear Love
 now sing!

NEIGHBORS

I took a house, a cottage neat,
Upon a friendly, homey street;
A bit of garden 'round it lay,
With plants and flowers here and there,
Familiar blooms of everyday,
A shrub or two of rather rare
Appearance . . . I'm the usual kind;
And in the garden now I find
Some plants I know at once by name,
Their families and kin, the same
I cannot say of others—they
At first are strangers. Oh, but soon
They smile at me; I learn the way
They live from Autumn clean to June
I have a home here snug and sweet,
Upon a friendly human street.

HEART'S-EASE

My life was like the winter white
With snow until the hour
Love came . . . one night
In Spring and now my heart's
in flower.

HER PICTURE?

I hold her picture. Fair it is to me,
And beautiful in every line,
In every light and shade, with joy I see
Her likeness fine.

But in my heart her Image lives and glows—
A living spirit-loveliness;
And round my heart it wraps itself and grows,
My life to bless.

But neither painted portrait exquisite
Nor mirrored, dreaming imagery
Can, as her living presence by me, quite
So lovely be!

WE, CHILDREN

We are but children . . . all of us . . . Sometimes we boast
About our puny strength . . . and when the day is bright,
We bravely wander far afield . . . self-confident . . . almost
Forgetting home and Father . . . But the Night
Creeps up o'er shadowy hills and woods . . . and . . . then
We fly for refuge to the Father's arms again . . again!

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
WITH OUR SWEETHEARTS

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO WITH OUR SWEETHEARTS



EVOLUTION

I.

My heart was whole . . . and others pitied me,
They who had felt the precious wounds and known
The sweet, rare anguish that has ever been
The portion of the loving . . . I could be
Serene in innocence—and ignorance—alone
I walked my way, believing vainly it were almost sin
To be a casualty. I boasted my sincerity! . . . And still
Untouched, unstirred, came once to me a Thrill—
I know not whence. Oh, I have, yes, now and then,
Envied the wounded waited for that thrill again.

II.

One day a Confidence brought one to me
Who had been wounded—fatally in heart;
And, introduced, he told me how that he
Had long ago been victim of the dart
That leaves such precious wound the ages through. . . .
'Twas suddenly that he was smitten, as if it had been
A flash of golden lightning-flame from out the blue
Of Heaven itself. . . And so I waited, hoping deep within
My soul adventurous I might fall victim. . . . It was vain,
This daring, darling hope. . . Another fell . . . And yet
again
Another. . . . Still I was unscathed. But now and then

Complaisant restlessness possessed me and I longed
For Love's assault, feeling as one irreparably wronged.

III.

Then I was conscious, barely, that another walked
With me along life's way, one like unto myself; and she
Was all serene and innocent. We talked
Of this and that, the other—then one evening we
Discovered we were much alike. . . . And at the end
Of one delightful day I knew she was my friend,
And she—ah, she was gracious, too, to own
My friendship was companionship. . . Alone,
I left her—and with her, it seemed, a part
Of something deep, unselfish in me—in my heart.

IV.

I saw her now and then . . . Soon, oftener! Between
Us soon there was the bond that grew—
Of sympathy and confidence, respect as seen
In my near-rev'rence of her. Moments flew
When I was in her presence, dragged most tediously
If distance or if time had parted us. . . One day to me
Came slowly the dread fear that I might lose
Her sweet companionship. . . And then I knew
I, too, was Victim—not by swift attack as I might choose
From hearing others tell their stories, but by slow
And surer way. . . . Yes, wounded unto death. . and happy,
too!—

In that delicious misery which only lovers know.

V.

But when I sought to tell her all
That had grown up and twined about my life and heart—
Oh, I was coward—fears, hopes, mad desire that may appall
An earnest, honest one! . . . Then something drew us both
apart

From all the world about, and we were deaf and blind
To the whole universe—for us a world our very own
Had been discovered. . . When I searched her eyes to find
The one supreme response that could alone
Lift me to life, there, timid and elusive at the first flamed up
The light of Love. . . . And brimming was my cup.

VI.

Since that first day when you and I
Each saw the other's heart, and knew
That God had matched them for each other by
The pattern of His love—you have been true. . .
And I, despite the seeming outward tokens of a lapse
In little tenderness and thoughtfulness alway,
Despite forgetfulness, just now and then perhaps
Occasioned by material circumstance, no day,
No night, no hour, no moment there has been
When every heart-beat, every breath, and every effort, fine
Or failing, was not—all around, without, within—
To keep you, Sweetheart, wholly mine!

GIFT

I do not ask your pledge, my dear,
Always to love me so,
And swear to constancy sincere
As all the years shall go.

Just love me now, my little one;
This simple gift allow,
And through the years from sun to sun
Let every day be now!

THE FIRST PROMISE

She promised me again today; and in my heart
A tender warmth diffused;
I claimed a kiss, love's pledge, love's blessing to impart—
And then I mused:

Once, years ago—how short and fleeting they have seemed!—
She pledged me; and I swore
To love and cherish; I remember, then I dreamed
Of days before:

One summer evening—soft the sky and sweet the air—
A river singing near—
No priest, no ritual, no service save my prayer,
Her promise dear!

Beyond that: In the past there was another day;
Unknowing were we when
Her eyes met mine; in them a wondrous secret lay. . . .
We promised—then!

LOVE SONG

A painting is a silent poem,
So I've heard them say
Who have studied both, you know,
Quite the critic's way.

Then I know a portrait fair
That must surely be
More than poetry—it is
A song of love to me!

V O W

I will not say I love you, dear,
For words are cheap at best—
So easily they're spoken—mere
Forgotten whims expressed.

I will not write: "I love you, dear"—
For ink will fade at last,
The snow-white sheet I'm using here
Will soon be yellowed past.

But I will live my love for you;
My heart holds fast its creed:
My life, love's fine expression true
In thought and word and deed.

"THESE THREE"

Faith came to me one day and offered rich reward
If I would trust her but a day,
And gave me surety enough amply to guard
My int'rests. She would pay!

Hope merely promised, made no bond, but offered me
Her word alone the pledge to make
Secure the pay for what I was to do or be.
Could I her token take?

But Love no guarantee assured, no promise gave,
But bade me labor, sacrifice,
And give my life to her. . . And willing, brave,
I gladly paid the price.

CAPRICE

Love has been quite contrariwise with me:
When I have tried so hard, you see,
To be what Love would have me be,
She is content to let it go at that
And leave me flat.

Love has been quite contrariwise with me:
When I have wandered far, you see,
And been what I should never be—
Because she's Love, she calls me o'er and o'er
To love me—more!

THE TRINITY

Faith.

Faith sees the real, invisible, and sure,
Eternal things that will endure;
For Faith has eyes which darkness, in or out,
Makes more alert; and even Doubt,
Arch-enemy of Faith, but spurs her on to see
The truth, its permanence, its mystery.

Hope.

Hope now is less than Faith—and more;
For Hope may hang upon a slender thread
Which would not hold Faith up, when sore
Afraid, Faith almost fell. Hope may be blind and tread
The wandering path quite purposeless, save for desire;
Or, Hope may have a reason, so aspire
To be support and helper unto Faith. And when
Faith has expired, Hope smiles serenely even then.

Love.

The greatest of these three, above
The firmest faith, the fondest hope, is Love.
And why? Because Love first implanted Hope within
The human breast, and Love first taught the art
Of Faith; Love ever, always, everywhere has been
Back of and underneath and through the heart
Where Faith and Hope have had abiding place;
And Love is the supreme, supernal grace.

ANSWERLESS

I.

"I, who have deep capacity for being loved, I love in vain;
I, who can love most passionately, feel
No warm response, and hope is echoed but by pain.
The price I pay . . . There is no measure I may gain . . .
Is there no balm the aching emptiness to heal?
Is there for me no hope to learn
The mystic art which fans the flames that burn
So low and flickeringly? May I not yet acquire
That subtle something in myself that stirs desire,
That draws responsive passion in its eager fire?"

II.

"And I, who know not aught of loving, see
The surging passion ever threaten me;
I, who am cold clean to the heart and have no care
That others should be drawn to me, am full aware
Of ardor most impetuous unto me turned. . .
But I am answerless; there has not burned
Within my heart the faintest living breath. . .
The mystery remains: My heart, abiding place of death!"

BACKGROUND

She wore a rose
 Against a gown of gray. . .
She knows. . . .
 Her life has been that way.

There had been sorrow in her life,
And keen defeat that followed bitter strife.
She was not bittered; and the change
In her, by transmutation strange,
But toned the setting where
Her face, all radiant, warm and fair,
Shined with a softer, sweet,
Refined, new beauty, perfect and complete.

She wears a rose
 Against a gown of gray. . .
She knows. . . .
 Her life will be that way.

UNIVERSE

A little world of three, dear heart,
 Beneath a summer sky—
 And Love is queen
 Of the realm, I ween,
And her subjects—You and I.

A little world of three, dear heart,
And I am Hope, you see,
 And you are Faith—
 And there is no death
In our little world of Three!

LOVE'S EYES

One said that "love is blind". And yet
I know Love and I know that Love can see,
And what she sees she never may forget
If she is pleased with it, whatever it may be.

In commonplaces, drab and gray,
Love catches exquisite and half-hid glints
And gleams of colors marvelous; no day
May pass she does not vision rainbow tints.

In dull, disordered, jumbled things,
Love's eager eyes find symmetry and grace,
And, smiling ever as she softly sings,
She sees rare beauty in the plainest, homely face.

And so, I wonder if we err!
Perhaps it's Love alone can see aright—
The gift of vision keen is given her,
And only Love has super-human, clearest sight!

PLEA AND SENTENCE

If 'twere sin to love you, dear,
I am steeped in sin;
I could not reform, I fear,
I could not begin.

If 'twere crime to kiss you—say,
Criminal am I;
Sentence me for life, I pray—
And I shall never die!

MESSENGER

One day
Love met a little Sorrow on the way
And summoned him as messenger
To Her.
And Sorrow, with his plaintive face
And grace
Of tenderness in pain, ,
Straightway
Departed, sought Her out,
With never doubt
Of sympathy, and nestled near
Her heart, and whispered in Her ear
The message he alone could bear
Aright.
And when
He told Her, then
She knew
That Love was true . . . that Love was true.

TRANSLATION

Each heart speaks in a language all its own,
And somewhere in this wide, wide world of hearts
Is there for each, one true interpreter alone
Who only can read understandingly its arts.

So, somewhere love will one day find for you
That True Interpreter who by her mystic art
Will read the mysteries and secrets through
Now writ in cipher in the language of your heart.

BRIBERY

Yes, dear, I'm now a can'idate, a-runnin' of a race,
An' all my hopes o' life depend on gittin' o' this place.
I want to make my 'nouncement plain an' state my platform
true—

My principles are centered in one little "I love you!"
An' if you don't object to "rings" an' women's votin', w'y,
Jest march up to my ballot-box an' vote a simple, "Aye!"
There needn't be another vote—I'd be elected then,
An' be the proudest victor that the country's ever seen.
For jest that single vote I'll give a heart, a life, a love,
An' promise to be true to trust while heaven reigns above!

CONVERT

We had a love-feast 'tother night,
Jest Molly, dear, an' me;
The meetin' done us good, a sight—
The most you ever see!

I made a talk, on love in part;
We sung together then;
I led in pray'r right from my heart
An' Molly said, "Amen!"

I told her my experience true;
I seen her kind o' start!
I was exhortin'—she "come through"—
There'd been a change o' heart.

I made a proposition, an'
Invited all to j'ine—
An' Molly give me her small han'
An' I give Molly mine!

LIVING PLEDGE

I saw her in her beauty and I heard her voice so sweet and
low—

Far-off, it seemed, yet clear as in the days of long ago;
I saw and heard, and yet she was beyond the reach of me,
My eager arms embraced the empty air—strange!—mystery!

Now she's come home from out the dreamland where she
seemed

One sanctified from earthly touch; the light that gleamed
From eyes of love on yesterday is burning brighter now,
And she has brought with her a Living Answer to love's vow!

A LOVE SPELL

Letters, letters, piles and stacks,
By the morning's mail in packs,
Letters to arrange or mix—
Ah, exactly twenty-six
From Him—one whole alphabet;
Which is fortunate; I'll let
Each remain in place just where
I can find it, should I care
To endeavor by some whim
To select a thought from him,
Turn his lit'ral message, make
Quaint reply. Let's see: I'll take
Here and there, to weave this spell,
Now a letter; say, an "L",
Then as fate the one shall show
I will further pick an "O",

Next, by chance as it may be,
Draw a third, the letter, "V"—
Having thus progressed so fast,
"E" is easy for the last;
"L" and "o" and "v" and "e"—
That's my answer, plain to see.

TRAGEDY

She had longed for Love to come to her, and dreamed
In day, at night, like unto what 'twould be,
The Great Experience—'twas so it seemed
To her that it would come. . . . And she
Waited and watched and wished for it the while,
Expecting he would greet her with a smile
And lead her then into the fields of rare delight,
Elysian land of fairest hopes and rarest joy,
Where happiness through all the hours without alloy
Would bring her visions heavenly. . . Her dream
Came never true; Love came not radiant and bright—
But to her brought the Tragedy supreme.

ALONE?

The shadow shrouded me. . . . Alone
I went unto, into Gethsemane my own;
For Hope, far off, had fallen quite
Asleep; I could not see Faith's face there
in the night. . . .
Alone? . . . One stood beside me then
In silent sympathy. . . . And when
All others had forsaken, and above
The very heavens mocked, came Love.

THE HOPELESS

When She shall come to me I shall be waiting near
Th' appointed meeting-place, a-hush to hear
The first soft touch of footfall that shall tell
That she remembered well
Her promise, oh, so precious, whispered low and sweet,
Her heart upon the lips which mine would meet
In answer eager, passionate. . . . But, no—
It cannot now be so.
I cannot search for her like knights of old, I may
Not fight for her and win, bear her away
A willing captive; I must wait in vain
Fast to my master, Pain!

LONELY PATH

There are some paths, dear heart, too narrow now
For us to walk together, hand in hand. The shadows fall
Across the way, and into it I go alone. I know not how
Or why it should be so. I cannot hear your call
In love and comradeship—save faintly; and I cannot see
The light of your dear eyes—save dimly; for a space
I grope in loneliness no human heart may share,
No friendly touch may lighten now the load; no face
May cheer. Now I have only faith and hope and—prayer.

RE-PLEDGING

I do not ask of you today
Again a pledge. For far above
All words of any, every tongue,

Sweeter than song, the sweetest ever sung,
In daily, newer proofs in every way
I have your love.

I do not promise you today
Again to be—nor yet in part
But wholly with each living breath
And then beyond the incident of death—
Yours only. I shall live each coming day
For you, sweetheart.

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
FOR THE OUT-OF-DOORS

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO FOR THE OUT-OF-DOORS



DAFFODILS

Once did Mother Nature prudent, counting for the days to
come,
Rainy days, perhaps, bethink her how she might lay by a sum,
Treasure golden that might serve her in the times of pinch
and stress—
Who knew but that she might need it for an early Spring-
time dress!

So she stored the gold of Summer and the riper gold of Fall
In the oft-forgotten corners where no prying eyes at all
Ever would be searching for it. . . . My! the yellow-golden
frills
Mother Nature wears in March in worlds and worlds of
daffodils!

MOUNTAINS

Here rear the mountains, monuments to God!
Piles reared by Nature to Omnipotence!
Night veils them, and then duskily they nod;
Dawn wakes them, and they worship. . . Hence,
First of all silent creatures, they
Are kissed by sunlight of approaching Day;
And last, upon the face of sleeping Might,
Falls their farewell, the sinking Sun's "Goodnight!"

WOOD-VIOLET'S BIRTH

Know you whence the Violet came? Truly, no?
Let me tell you: Long ago
Ruled an austere, rugged king—
Name was "Winter"—lord alone
On a frost-fringed, frigid throne
In a palace of glacier-stone.

And he loved a nymph named "Spring".

But this tyrant's awkward art
Ne'er could win the maiden's heart.

So he bribed a cupid cunning,
Chid him to the chase a-running,
So to take the lovely maiden. . . .

. . . . And a dart
From the bow he lightly pressed
Pierced her snowy, pulsing breast. . . .

There—where purple blood-drops fell
Trickling to the thirsty sod,
Sprang up Violets, so they tell—
Smiling through their tears to God!

STARS AND FLOWERS

I love the stars where God has writ
In gold upon the page of blue
His secrets infinite in cryptic record, fit
Revealing of His power. . . . But who
Has not gazed upward, rapt in awe complete,
And crushed the miracles in blossom at his feet?

THREE BLOSSOMS

On every nodding stem in Spring,
If low or swinging far above,
The blossoms breathe of but one thing,
And that is—Love.

In Summer's lush and glorious day
Then is no time to fear nor mope—
Luxurious blooms in every way
Express a—Hope.

But late in Autumn, when the chill
Of Winter, like a fearsome wraith,
Is in the air—are blossoms still
Speaking their—Faith!

FOREST FIRES

The red and yellow flecks of flame
Are twinkling in the verdant forest-sky;
The sunset's reddened, nor with shame—
The Autumn winds with warning rustle by.

The frosty breath but fans the fire;
The mountain-side is glowing as it spreads;
One says, "'Tis Summer's fun'ral pyre"—
Yet is no panic, still there are no dreads.

The hint of coming cold is keen,
And prudence preparation now inspires;
And so these signals now are seen—
Jack Frost is lighting all his Winter fires!

CLEW

Here on this maple leaf I found a spot
Of crimson, such a vivid blot
Of color that I wondered if a shot
From Winter's frost-built fortress had not sped
Through Indian Summer's haze of red
And pierced hot fleeting Summer's heart
With ice-tipped dart—
And left upon this leaf the tell-tale Autumn red
Where Summer—bled!

LARKSPUR

"Now, do you know," she asked one day,
A little girl with winning way,
"Just where the Easter bunnies grow,
The ones that bring the eggs, you know?"

And when I said, in mild surprise,
"They do not grow," her twinkling eyes
Quite pitied me my ignorance,
As off she tripped with fairy dance.

Returning—and her hands held tight
Some fragile larkspurs, blue and white
And pink—she held them up to me
The center of each bloom to see.

And there, in hues like Easter eggs,
Concealed as for their nether legs,
Were rabbits' heads with ears and eyes
And noses free from all disguise!

Out of each larkspur blossom rose
A bunny's bust with quivering nose;
Now vanishes each skeptic doubt—
From every bloom a head peeped out!

CHEROKEE ROSE

This dear little country mother of all other roses rare,
Simple and unaffected, breathing the gen'rous air
Of the Georgia hills and valleys—far up on the mountain
side,

Down in the river lowlands, and along the shore of the
lake—

Allwheres it grows contented. . . . Its opened petals make
A radiant star in the greenery, with the yellowed heart of
gold,

The same in its chaste simplicity as the Cherokee rose of
old. . . .

Her daughters fair have been cultured in the artificial air
Of the hot-house, tenderly nurtured, developing wondrously
there—

Great glorious queens are some of them, rich in their velvet
dress,

Delicate gowns wear some of them, soft as a babe's caress;
Color—profusion of tinting; ravishing fragrance sweet,
Winter and Summer they're smiling, and where both the
seasons meet,

But back in the native heather, dainty in delicate grace,
Is the mother of all the roses, content in her modest place.

This little country mother of all the roses rare
Must cling to the heather home-spot with love and a wistful
care;

Away, and a few strange hours, she droops and withers and
dies;
To be at her best she must, smiling, live out under open skies,
And her face is never so radiant as when, after storm has
passed,
It's drenched with the tears of the heavens. . . And so, at
last, at last,
Away from the rich-red beauties, intoxicant with flame;
Away from the cultured blossoms that in gorgeous gowning
came,
Away from the wearying changefulness, variety, and art
Of her artificial daughters! Back, back to the mother-heart!
The same she was in the years ago when Indian maiden kissed
Her snowy lips and the same she'll be when you and I are
missed—
Coming when Summer has called her, living her life of good
In her own appointed home-place, in heather, on road-side,
in wood—
This mother of all the roses, dainty in delicate grace,
With petals of alabaster, the light of God's smile in her face.

REVERIE

The poplar leaf is yellowed. So each year
At frost-time fall the poplar leaves. But here
The pine stands, dark and green, the whole
Long twelve-month through. Poplar and pine
Seek their same food deep in the soul
Of the answering soil, and the same shine
Of the sun gives them life, and the rain
Is the same as it falls for their thirst.
They share of the best and the worst!
And the pine sheds its needles each year,

Yet the green it can somehow retain,
While the newness discards all the sere
Growth that was. Both live and both change—
One is bare half the year; one, evergreen—strange!
It is nature. . . . It is so, too, with men:
In one, something holds through the changes; and yet
There's another must flourish a season, and then
Unto circumstance pay stated measure of debt!

WHITE DOGWOOD

Perhaps it is because the throb
Of unborn Summer's heart as yet
Is faint! The late frosts rob
The world of life, none may forget!
And so the tim'rous blossoms might
For lack of red-hot life be—white!

Perhaps now Mother Earth, serene
And passionless reserv'dly gives
The purity of chaste queen
To this, her first-born, as it lives
Courageously upon a bed of green,
Reflection—as the North-winds go—
Of whiteness of a cold and placid snow!

OCTOBER BLUSH

The lithe young tree stood beautiful and straight—
Far in the virgin wood, exquisite in grace
Of limbs. The Frost-man crept up late
One still October evening to the place,
And whispered to her. . . Shuddering, she shrank

And trembled. . . . Then again he drew
Nearer unto her and she drank
His words in breathless fear: "Before the week
Is gone, I strip your garments green!" How true
His threat, she had but once to seek
The confidences of her sisters old, older than she. They
told her, all, the same
Experience. . . In the night there came
Clandestinely a lover, Shame,
To work his magic. . . Then, next morning found
Her blushing scarlet from the tip, clean to the ground.

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
ALONG THROUGH THE YEAR

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO ALONG THROUGH THE YEAR



“RESOLVED”

Whereas I’ve resolute pretty copiously in the past,
An’ the resolutions somehow never seemed to wear an’ last,
An’, whereas I find I’m limited in my resistive strength
An’ am prone to be forgetful o’ my good resolves at length—

An’ whereas I’ve ’bout concluded that it’s better to have not
Resolute then at all than to have straightway clean forgot;
An’ whereas I b’lieve it’s better not to bite off more than I
Can well chew—or I might choke! this resolution now I’ll
try:

Resolved I’ll go it easy as the New Year time draws nigh,
Avoid the rash, impulsive pledge, an’ pass the promise by;
I do subscribe to just one thing—an’ then I sweetly sleep:
Resolved I’ll make no resolutions that I cannot keep!

LONELY GARDEN

Each heart must sometime, somewhere bear
The burden of its own Gethsemane;
The sorrow and the trial come to each which none may share;
Into the silent darkness but a little way—alone, perhaps it
be—
But dearest friend may never lead nor brother follow there!

WHEN WINTER WENT AWAY

When Winter went away,
Then rude young March-wind hushed his turb'lous tone,
And through the sighing pines he'd, murmuring, moan,
And April wept a night and day;
Then May-flower all her floral wreaths caressed
And piled them lovingly upon his breast—
When Winter went away!

When Winter went away,
The elves from out the Easter lilies stole apace
To look upon his pale, cold, marble-smooth, calm face
And frosted beard and hair of gray,
And, shrinking, touched the shroud of shining, snow-wove
white,
And sang a tender requiem before they took their flight—
When Winter went away!

When Winter went away,
The angels gently covered him with fragrant flowers
And swept the storm-plumes back for hours and hours,
And, towering toward the heavens, they
Set up a white-capped mountain for a monument,
And in the valley planted Freesias sweet with scent!
When Winter went away.

A ROUND DELAY

It's owing to the weather, whether an ode to Spring is just
the thing just now; and so I wonder how 'twould do to
write a slight, trite lyric quite out of the ordinary style,
to raise a smile—

Now, while the other things are coming up, including violet and buttercup and daisies—(by the way, today I recollected that I had a gentle cow once on a time, that, just to make her rhyme, I named “O. Daisy”—“O”, you understand for “Ox-Eyed”—and she died of rust, the watered stock!)—I must

Get back unto my theme: I thought to dream a springy idyl lilting on its feet, of meadows sweet, and bursting buds, and wooing zephyrs, and that sort of thing

The poets usually rant about, anent the Spring; perhaps slip in a jest or gibe or something of that ilk, of Gentle Annie in her silk-

En hosiery of rainbow hue—for bow-legs, probably—but two rude things deter me: One is the now recurring fling by editors about all “slush on Spring”; the other is the fact that just as soon as words line up with tune that chords with balmy, scented air of infant summer-time and all its rhyme, then there’s a reason to lose faith in this new season—

Every time I start a rhyme and sing of Spring, before the thing gets into type the weather changes to a freeze, the breeze blows blizzardly, I sneeze the wheeze and every flower that grows—and blows—

Shows symptoms of the runts and stunts—and then it snows!
. . And so, until the editors warm up a bit, the weatherman decides upon a higher thing, I’ll try no hit with an apostrophe—nor even dash—to “Spring.”

VALENTINE

In Hope which hardly dared to ask,
In ecstasy uncertain but divine—
'Twas Diffidence begged Modesty in mask,
"Will you not be my Valentine?"

In Trust that now seems strange to me,
Quite won by eager confidence of mine—
How heavenly that welcome change to me!
She said, "I'll be your Valentine."

And from that moment, far above
All other moments, by each tender sign,
By every token, every seal of Love,
She has been true—My Valentine!

SEED-TIME

Hard hoofs of heavy horses tramping slow,
And heels of clumsy boots that, restless, tread;
The rude removal of brown rubbish dead
And useless; the unwelcome visit so
Disturbing to the stagnant soil thus long
Settled and selfish, placid in decay;
And then the plough-steel's cruel plunge away
Into the heart of earth with purpose strong!

So: Progress, with its steady, grinding tread,
Advances; virile hand now holds the reins,
Guides to the furrow, and Reform upturns
The lifeless mass all heedless of its pains;
Sunshine and warmth let in, the fallow learns
It may give life to seeds, bear living bread!

P U R I M

From the far times of ancient history the fast
And festival upon it following have come to us. And back
Of Esther's coming to the kingdom, past
The long deliverance from Orient foes, the track
Of this recurring celebration runs. Into the dim
And misty times of primal peoples who began
To note that with the solstice-time the rim
Of sunshine broadened, hosts of Winter hedging man
For weary siege-months, fled in rout,
And Spring, the resurrection queen, stepped out
To bring deliv'rance to her people who
Were loved and served no less than they were true;
"For such a time as this" the Spring-queen came
Upon the kingdom of the seasons. . . . By the same
Old token is the fast, commemorating Winter drear,
And then glad festival because the Spring is here.

P E R P E T U A L E A S T E R

I do not wait a weary year for Eastertide;
Not yet do I abide
A whole week through till 'round
Again the first day comes in which abound
The symbols of remembrance clear
Of the Arisen Lord! Each morning now I hear,
"Oh, He is ris'n indeed!" Each hour recalls
His resurrection. Every moment falls
In rhythmic beat: "He died, He lives; He died, He lives!"
Each breath, each pulse-beat gives
Me its assurance, even through the strife,
"He lives again; therefore *I Have* eternal life!"

A P R I L

No wonder April long ago
Gained repute for fickleness,
Placed just where she is, you know,—
Will you blame or will you bless?

Set between a boisterous churl,
Rude, unmannered, raw and rough,
And a gentle, winsome girl—
There's occasion quite enough!

Changeable? You well might be
If positioned just her way;
You'd be shifting, too, as she
There between a March and—May!

SHABBOTH

Six furlongs traveled I, bearing my load
Along the tortuous and crag-studded road.
Oh, there were pauses for a night or half a night,
When I lay down beside the way and made a light,
Ate food and got a breath—but did not take
The pack-strap off, a little break
To give anew the strength to travel on.
The seventh comes—the week of labor gone!
Unstrap, unharness, leave the load outside,
And with it every care! One day abide
In this, the house of Rest—but not the rest
Of idleness. Be glad today and sing,
And to the altars of the spirit bring
Choice offering—of happiness, of praise,
Of prayer, upon this rest-day of the days!

THE DAY BETWEEN

The shadow of the cross falls dark across this day.
Hope, sick to death, falls there beside the way;
Love ministers and—weeps;
Faith, too, itself, now sleeps,
Numbed and unconscious from the shock
Of disappointment. The little flock
Must through this darkness—wait! . . . Out where the days
are born
There is a hint—a Light! the promise of the Morn!

VIA CRUCIS

Today the cross I face,
Symbol of service and of sacrifice and—grace!
Aye, I would follow in His footsteps; I would live
To give as He has died to—give
Abundant life! . . . Unless
I, too, take up my cross to bless
The world in service and in sacrifice,
I am not worthy of the price
He paid for my redemption. . . So,
Let me to my Golgotha go!

SPIRITS OF AUTUMN

Through these September days, beneath the softening autumn
skies,
A-quiver in the haze—are scores of silent butterflies;
And I have fancied they are spirits flitting through the
hours—
Thought that perchance they may be souls of summer's faded
flowers.

WHITSUNDAY

They walk today all robed in white
 Who lately groped in darkest night,
 For they have seen the Light of Light—
 On them the Tongue of Fire
 Descended from the Heav'n on high,
 That all the world, as they passed by,
 May read and know the reason why
 The Spirit may inspire
 New hearts which have the vision keen
 To know what Truth and Service mean—
 Baptized for Sacrifice, for e'en
 Life-giving martyr's pyre.

THE "PRESENT" QUESTION

For HIM

A bit of—nothing? yet
 Worth everything! nor will forever he forget
 The giving; as one sweetness sips
 From honeyed flower, he takes it from her lips.

For HER

An emblem—endless—worth
 More than the treasure of all earth,
 He reckoned it, when all was done,
 And found the total: "Won and-One!"

For THEM

Soft lights and softer music then, their love
 In whispered vows, with God above;
 The priestly blessing—laughter—smiles—and sighs—
 A strange new light in misty eyes!

FOREVER

And this in all the changeless past
Is quite, at last,
How Present turns to Future in a day—
And love is life and life is love—alway!

ON EASTER!

Now He is ris'n, is ris'n indeed!
Upon this fact the faith and creed
Of Christians rest,
If they, His foll'wers faithful sought
The sign and seal of promise bought
With service blest
And blood of sacrifice He gave—
They found it in His emptied grave.

But He is ris'n anew today!
He lives again! Along our way
We see Him yet—
In hearts which have been born anew
We trace His image, clear to view;
His seal is set
In living service unto men—
In sacrifice, He lives again!

The living test supreme is still
His resurrection; I fulfill
His promised word
When I, a living witness, show
In all I do, where'er I go,
My Living Lord,
That all the waiting world may see
His resurrection life in—Me!

EPITAPH!

The Old Year's dead!
And at his grave, there at the head,
We would set up a monument;
For he, with all his scars,
And wounds, the mark that mars,
Was quite a good sort after all. Intent
We are to write
Upon the tombstone white
An epitaph to do him justice. So,
Look as you go:
There stands the monument to him,
And in the twilight dim
Appear the legends writ
Indelibly upon the face of it
Already—just what you and I
Have done as he passed by
Is there his epitaph, each word of ours
A letter and each deed a word. . .
And kindly angels have laid flowers
There at the foot—by sweet forgiveness stirred!

ON ST. PETER'S DAY

I've scrutinized the list of saints,
The martyrs called of old;
I've loved, revered and honored them
Whose hearts were living gold.

I've found them honest, pious, true;
Some gentle, some austere;
These men who walked with God and felt
No sin nor pride nor fear.

Yet one appeals to me with more
Completeness, when I'm faint—
Or confident—for Peter's such
A human sort of saint!

WHERE I MAY BE

Oh, friend of mine, loved one, if you
Should miss me at the Christmas time and find
That I have not remembered you, I pray you do
Not charge me with forgetfulness of mind,
Nor negligence in love. In one of two
Sure places I may be:
Seeking for one who is an enemy to me,
Asking his pardon, giving him my love that he
Again may be my friend; or else I may
Be searching for that one, who on a joyous day
Has no one else to think of him. . . If you
Should miss me, search for me in just these places two.

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
IN QUIET PRAYER HOURS

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO IN QUIET PRAYER HOURS



A BETTER PRAYER

I do not thank Thee, Lord, for paths of ease,
For ways of pleasantness and pleasures sweet—
So much as I give thanks for chance to seize
The opportunity, the task to meet!

I do not pray Thee, Lord, for easy ways,
But for the strength to go till evening late;
I do not ask for things to make the days
More easy, but for grace that makes life great.

GREAT GOD

I cannot worship any god who is no bigger than
Mere man!

The god who earns my tribute, he must be
Taller and finer than the best of men, and he
Needs must be older, younger, wiser, too,
More powerful and—loving; and One who
Can match and master all the best
Of men and—all the rest! . . .

I cannot reverence a god, of any land,
Whom I can understand!

IN JOSEPH'S GARDEN

B. C.

The tomb, a cavern dark and dank—
The sepulcher, the end! In gloom
They peered into its depths, and shrank
In fear. By it no flowers bloom!

A. D.

The grave, a gate-way glorious, bright,
Through which the vision rare of God
Floods all the earth with heav'nly light—
On either side the pledging lilies nod!

BY WAY OF THE ALTAR

Back in the early twilight of the dawn,
When withered Eden lay rebuking man,
And Law and Justice ruled, and Peace had gone
From Paradise, with Mercy under ban—
The path through thorns and under crosses passed,
And by an altar with its sacrifice,
Its blood for blessing, and the life at last
Its penance for redemption; life, the price.

So down the tortuous way, from Eden's plain
To Calvary, one line of altars real!
The via crucis through the years of pain,
The bloody foot-prints' sacrificial seal—
They trace the triumphs which the race has wrought,
And every vict'ry wrested on the way
Meant sacrifice, the victory was bought
With blood; the altar was the place of pay!

Thus in our lives are monuments, not stones—
Nor golden shrine!—where lamb or dove was slain,
But altars still; where in the night, alone,
Some hope, bound fast, 'mid tears and grief, has lain;
And "It is finished!" we cannot exclaim
Till some supreme Golgotha rears its cross,
Till from the fagots flashes up the martyr flame—
Success means sacrifice, and gain is loss!

NEW BIRTH

("A broken and a contrite heart.")

I saw an ugly, angular, misshapen piece
Of concrete—worse than useless. And increase
Of years but added to its obduracy. It had missed
The mark of its high calling to a place
There in the temple fair! (Qualities consist
Of life and character). . . The case
Of this unseemly object gave me thought. . . One day
'Twas broken by a blow. . . the pieces in a way
Were re-assembled and cemented; thus, reformed, it lay—
Still useless, uglier for all the seams and scars. . . But then
A Master Moulder took the thing, and when
He thrust it deep into the crusher, ground
It once again to dust—as dust it had been at the first—He
could
Re-make it—as He would. . . He moulded it into his own
Transcendent image, breathed again into this new creation
there
Breath of a New life! . . For the heart is where
Life—and new life—begin. . . .
So is regeneration . . . , man . . . and—sin!

WAITING FOR FAITH

I know that there are times when it is sin
To sit and wait for answer to a prayer,
When faith is shown expressly in
Activity. . . . But there
Are times when waiting is a virtue high—
Perhaps the highest—waiting still
And patiently *with* Faith until
The answer comes. . . . And more heroic, fine—
The quiet waiting *for* Faith's answering sign.

"AS A LITTLE CHILD"

"Of such," He said—the "'little' children" there—
"My kingdom is." Again, another morning where
Arose discussion of the terms in which
Admittance to the Kingdom are expressed, with rich
And secret meaning, simply He
Said, "If my kingdom you would see
You must become as he may be,
Is here, this 'little' child". . . .
At first I thought of innocence and mild
Docility and faith of childhood—they
Are qualities most beautiful! A later day
I knew He meant, "Ye must be born again!" I knew
He had in mind the "'little' child", a true
Example of a fresh New Life, a nature fair,
Unsullied and potential, pure and rare
And clean from the Creator's hand. . .
So now I understand
That "as a 'little' child" implies
A new creation in the Father's eyes.

A RELIGION

It is the universal need.
Therefore, it's mine; but not a creed
In formal statement cold,
Nor any dogma old.
It is a life and more: a living; for the one,
The living, is expression done
From life. . . Its elements are three:
A faith—in good, therefore in God, a faith that goes
Back to first causes, is today, and throws
Itself out to infinity beyond; and then
A hope, hope for the best in me, from men,
Through circumstance; and, more: Above
These two, imparted from its source eternal,—Love!

POEMS OF GOD

(“Ye are God’s workmanship,” “workmanship” literally
meaning a “poem”.)

I like to think of child of Him as part
Of His creator, His creation, made in His own image, heart
And soul, a portion of the great Heart Infinite,
The Soul Eternal—like a ray of light
From out the sun of suns; His message true
And—living! with the breath of lives anew—
God’s poems! Through them He expresses then
His nature and His will to mortal men;
Speaking for Him, and suppliant to His will,
We are His highest revelations still
To all the earth. And being clear, harmonious, true,
The consonance divine is heard and felt in me and you!

A NOTE O' CHEER

'Tain't a bit o' use repinin'
 'Cause the summer's sun's a-shinin'—
 Doesn't do a mite o' good to cuss the weather
 An' it's folly, this complainin'
 At the constant clouds a-rainin'—
 Let's all quit an' sing a merry song together!

'Tain't no use to fret an' worry,
 Work yourself up to a flurry,
 When your little schemes o' life are out o' kelter;
 Jest remember, God still loves you,
 Spreads His tent o' blue above you
 With the curtained clouds an' rainbow fer a shelter.

THE GREATER MIRACLE

At the Beautiful Gate. . . . the hour of prayer. . . .
 A man, from birth a cripple, begging there. . . .
 And a disciple, passing in to pray
 That day. . . . The beggar's prayer; its answer not in kind
 He asked for—better, finer, any mind
 Can see. . . . Command from the apostle then to do
 The one thing which the cripple could not do. . He did it!
 . . . True
 The test and true the faith! . . . a Miracle! But that
 Was not the greater miracle that made the lame to walk,
 whereat
 The people marveled. . . The miracle supreme is here:
 That Cephas, who denied his Lord, now had no fear,
 Now had the faith with power to claim
 This healing of a beggar lame!

ANSWER

Give me the ear of faith, my Master, so that I may hear
Thy answer to my prayers. . . For I have prayed
Most ardently for this and that; received it not; and fear
Came then to me, fear that Thou didst not hear me when I
laid

My small petition out before Thee. . . . I have learned
'Twas I that could not hear, I did not catch the answer Thou
Didst send me. Though Thou didst not give me what I
asked, I turned

To find at last that Thou hadst answered better, so
In kindness and in love I heard Thy whispered, "No!"

THE BREATH OF LIFE

Call it by any name: The vision, or the dream, the inspira-
tion fine,

The inner impulse, or the outer call, the strange afflatus all
divine—

Bearing whatever designation, it is, at the last, but simple
Faith!

Feel it in influence most subtle or distinct, see it as wraith,
Or follow it as Living One; hear it as but a call in night
Alone, or in the busy day, a call to duty, to achievement's
height—

So it shall be but recognized, *there* is the one thing needful
. . . . We,

To be accounted faithful to the end, can never faithless be;
The vision we have seen, the call we heard, the infinite desire,
The yearning and the eager hope, the inspiration and the fire
Of life—that which is life itself in its unmeasured, vast,
Far possibilities, is this: But simple Faith at last!

POST GRADUATES

There are rare spirits, only now and then we find,
Who, having met the common tests of faith, are led
Into the inner sanctum, where only of the finest kind
Of faith are e'er admitted; and there, unafraid,
They face the test supreme which goes beyond belief;
A test keen-tinctured with the wormwood-gall of grief;
That last and highest trial of the soul which must
Be met with more-than-faith—with Trust!

AND MY FATHER

Thou God of Might!
Infinite wisdom and unmeasured, matchless power,
Whose mindful care and all-creative skill
Can speak a universe to life, or clothe a flower,
Omnipotent, omniscient, and all-present—still—
My Father!

Thou God of Justice!
Who holdest out the balances of sternest law,
Who wilt remember virtues well, nor vice forget,
Who canst not pass the slightest fault nor flaw—
Immutable, austere, and just, and—yet—
My Father!

Thou God of Love!
Love deeper than the ocean-depth and strong as death,
That gave Thine only Son a sacrifice for me,
Love tender as a mother's whispered breath—
Oh, God of Mercy, Thou wilt ever be—
My Father!

SHRINES OF REVERENCE

From Abel's altar ancient peoples piled
 Their simple shrines to sacrifice and—God;
 To Jacob's Bethel nestling near the sod,
To Ebenezer, help for hearts defiled,
On Jordan's bank where Providence had smiled
 And waters parted, as when Moses' rod
 Drew millions over mad'ning sea dry-shod—
These all were monuments, though "altars" styled.

And then the Temple most magnificent,
 Was builded that they might remember Him,
Jehovah! . . . Now wherever He has sent
 His chosen ones, if lands are bright or dim,
Thousands of spires point upward in the sun,
Mute Monuments to the Eternal One!

THE UNREMEMBERED ONE

If there be one, a lonely heart tonight,
Whom none, of all the world that kneels to pray,
Remembers—one that has no friend who may
Bear him in arms of faith up to the white,
Great mercy-seat—it is my precious right
To ask that he shall somehow be impressed
That there *is* one, unknown to him, whose best
Impulse of life inspires here to indite
An earnest prayer for *him*: "Oh, Father mine,
There is one solitary brother, one
All others have forgotten, child of thine;
Whoever he may be, whatever he has done,
This unremembered and un-prayed-for son,
Let me be sponsor for—where prayer-lights shine!"

A HURRIED PRAYER

Dear Lord, I have such little time today
I cannot find the usual hour to pray.

But I must take this moment now and here
To ask one thing—a wish immediate, dear!

I have a brother near in deep distress—
For him I pray; his troubled spirit bless!

Tomorrow for myself I may have time to pray—
But I must plead for him, my brother, now, today!

“THE ‘CHILD’ GREW”

I think there is significance in that
Plain statement. 'Twas the Child in Him that grew
As He advanced in wisdom and in stature. It is at
The little words we find the secret of the Word.
And so in His development, as Son of Man, 't is true
His waxing strong and wise—so that He stirred
The heart of all the waiting world—was due
To this one thing: That in His nature fine,
Human in growth as in its origin Divine,
The nature of the Child developed; and the heart
Of Childhood is its faith and trust in One
Who gave it life. And so, it is the finest part
Of *us* that grows—the Child in us. . “For none
Shall see My Kingdom,” once He later said, “who fails
Here to become, in pure humility, like to a little Child!”
Thus—on this line—our prayer for 'power avails
When we shall grow, as Children undefiled!

HUMILITY

Teach me humility, my Master, in the new,
Best way significant, that it may be the true
And vital kind; help me myself now to forget,
Lose sight of my own smallness, unimportance, yet
A littleness of which I only love to boast,
A self-effacement false which I am prone almost
To count a virtue in Thy sight; let me, instead,
Of being now absorbed in my own self, be led
To look at Thee, Thy greatness infinite, and see
In Thy sufficiency the littleness of me!

WHEN TO PRAY

Oh, it is fitting when the shadows fall,
When day is done out toward the western way,
And dark and dangers loom, and doubtings call,
To seek Thy kind protection and to—pray.

But it is better when the morning breaks,
When Opportunity is bidding me,
When Tasks are beckoning, when Trial makes
Attack—to plead for secret strength in Thee.

SELF-DENIAL

The rugged mountain yields
Itself, that fields
Down in the valley low
May fertile and productive grow.

Great forests ages old
The earth-depths hold
As fuel—sacrificed
In eons past the life they prized.

The seed to death is sown
That harvests grown
To fruitage may repay
The cost of life in their decay.

The patriot's dying breath,
The martyr's death,
The bloody footprints pressed
The path to liberty and rest.

So self-denial given,
The price of heaven ;
Some blood-bathed Cross may rise
To mark the path to Paradise!

HIS PICTURE

He paints His picture where all eyes may see
Its beauty, grace, sublimity!

For one on azure easel of the Orient sky
In hues of light and tinsel dashes, red and gold,
With shades of clouded gray and purple dye,
Painted by Morning's master fingers, sure and bold.

And for another 'gainst the storm-sky's scroll
He paints His wondrous power in flash of hurtling light,
And rends the curling, curtained tempest-roll
There to reveal indelibly His boundless might.

For yet another, on the flower's face

He paints in radiant blush His smiling beauty there,
And in the petals moulds His symmetry and grace,
And breathes His life in rising incense perfumed rare.

More beautiful: He paints in deathless love

His image on the canvas of a living heart,
And with His spirit-brush portrays, above
The human, the Divine outlinings of His highest art!

He paints His likeness where all eyes may see
His beauty, love, infinity!

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
ABOUT LIVING AND SUCH

JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO ABOUT LIVING AND SUCH



I AM RICH

Nobody knows how rich I am. Oh, they may see
I have of food and clothing my full share,
Of coin enough to be
Of service day by day to bear
Expenses of a fairly easy life. And they may go
To records, find I have a bit of land,
A house or two; the banks may show
I have a tiny sum by which to stand
If rainy days shall come. . . . But they
Can never know the riches far above
Material things I own today:
A thousand friendships and a wealth of love.

OPEN HOUSE

Faith entertained—a favored few
Alone were present, for they knew
Faith intimately. . . Then
Fair Charity was hostess when
A larger company flocked to her fete. . .
But when Hope stood down by her gate
And summoned passers-by to be
Her guests, all men came eagerly—
All, all were welcome, even to the least,
When Hope invited to a feast.

THE LIGHT

Bereavement blinded me, and Doubt
Then led me into darkness deeper yet;
The lights of all the world went out,
Nor was one solace left me: To forget.

But Love so gently took my hand,
And Faith in whispers guided thro' the night;
So that I now may understand—
For me the Light of all the world is bright.

CHARITY

Easy little thing it is
To suspect a friend;
Thus a comradeship in pain
Easily can end.

Simple little thing it is,
Once you understand,
To forgive, excuse, explain—
Write it in the sand!

SMALL AND GREAT

The little thoughts come trooping to us, bright,
Impertinent, and clever sometimes; often mere
Small ordinary ideas, everyday and commonplace,
So very like the thoughts of others, light
Or—lighter, colorless, or crude. . . The more
Important ones, the great thoughts, come by grace
Of patient waiting, ever-watching; and to be our own
They come to us in solitude—when we are all alone!

INMATE

Where does he keep his soul?. . .
There was a temple fair
Somewhere,
Most beautifully, delicately fashioned, white
And clean, to keep it in! . . .
His soul, where has it been?

A palace once there was in which
A royal tenant rich
Had been supposed to live. . . .
The neighbors never saw him give
The house attention, never spied
Him, proud of residence, smile from inside!

THE INDELIBLE

I may not borrow ink
With which to write.
For, could another think
My thoughts, originate that even slight
Fresh quality of thought, idea of mine?

But, there is blood, warm, red
And flowing from my heart. . . I sign
My thought in crimson, and am unafraid!

NOBODY HOME!

Mister 'Trouble, he come rappin', he come tappin' at my do'—
Seem lak I hear' dat soundin' an' dat poundin' oncet befo';
I know dey's gwine be cryin', en' a-sighin' ef he come—
So I's layin' low en' prayin' while I's sayin', "Ain't at home!"

LEGACY

I do not care to leave a vast
Estate of gold and lands and buildings tall,
Of bonds and stocks and mortgages and all
The wastrel wealth that perishes. At last,
When I have done my work, I pray
That there shall be some heart that may
Remember that I lived—and loved—and did some little deed
To prove it; and that there may be
Some life that found in me a need
Supplied; that something I have penned
Shall have struck home and claimed a—Friend!

A FOOL'S TASK

A Genius, touched with fire
From that creative source to which
Creative lives aspire!
A native gift so rich
That it was marvelous—by which
He visioned; and a skill,
A resolute and patient will
To realize the dream! . . . A picture fair
With such entrancing, rare
Appeal it spoke and sang and glowed
With life—appealed and showed
Forth years of living work the Genius had in love
Transferred unto the canvas from a realm above!

A Fool, unseeing, dull, possessed
Of the destructive demon—heeds a mad behest,
Rips it to shreds—an instant's work—a knife,
Quick as a flash, destroys the triumph of a life!

CONTENT

There have been major faults and sins here in my life—
Even in stress and strife
I have no good excuse, defense for them; but there
Is in my heart no jealousy nor envy. . . Fair,
Honest, even generous I've tried
To be
To friend and enemy! For I am satisfied
With what is mine, for me
It is enough to meet my wants; and there
Is compliment, instead of an occasion for the jealous ill,
If others love those whom I also love. . And so I will
Be still!
In heart and spirit clean . . .
Content. . . . serene!

THE MEASURE INFINITE

Day follows night, night trails after day,
 Again and yet again; the moon at night
 Follows her course of changes, dark to light;
Summer and Winter turn their ordered way;
The time of seeding and of harvest—they
 Recur with regularity by right
 Of law set in the far-beginning; flight
Of ages has been measured by the stay—

And start of pulse-beats of eternity!. . . .
 Life, large or lesser, must always depend
Upon the rhythmic breathing which may be
 Computed by the intervals that spend
Themselves; the Universe, a poem God may see
 And scan in rounded cycles without end!

FADE-OUT

Time gilds the great with glory. . . . And—
As they pass outward, toward the western line,
Like silhouettes heroic, clear, they stand—
The sunset glow and glint upon them shine. . . .
But shadows gather and the light recedes
And mist and mystery and clouds arise—
The elements upon which skepticism feeds—
The Human Great, last seen in sunset skies,
Become dim outlines—then mere gods. . . . At last
They are but Myths, when years enough have passed.

THIS DAY

This day! It is the father of a race
Of days that will come after it;
What this day, then, shall have—by grace
Or gift of industry—it will commit
To its posterity; and in the future days
There will be favor and resemblance found, I know
To this Today. . . . What careful ways
Should such progenitor select to go!

EASIER

It's such an easy, easy thing
Just to remember, now and then,
To do a thoughtful little act
That might prove doubly welcome when
It's done in time. And yet—and yet—
It's so much easier to—forget!

EFFORT

A race was run
By fleet of foot and sure of breath and strong of brawn;
The prize was won
Not by that runner who outstripped the rest,
But by the one who did his utmost, best—
The one who tried the noblest and through seeming failure
struggled on!

A battle stern
Was fought by the courageous, true and brave;
He did not earn
The rich reward who put his foe to rout,
But he who did his best through all the bout
And to the battle all his heart and head and holiest effort
gave.

And so it's not
Results that gauge success, but honest effort's best;
The victor's lot
Is his who tries, not his who triumphs free;
And in rewarding, just eternity
Not who has done the most, but who has tried the hardest—
he is blest!

SUBJECT OF A SENTENCE

A Man was dragged before the stern tribunal, Fate,
By Circumstance, the constable. Then all the weight
Of evidence was balanced, and the charge was read.
"The crime you're guilty of is Poverty," Fate said,
"And this your sentence that I therefore do decree:
A life-time servitude at labor shall it be!"

FAITH SAVES

Faith saves. But it is not your faith in God
Which saves, nor what you do
To prove belief in Him; for, still more wonderful!
It is God's faith in you.

Faith saves. And in our own humanity,
If others think you true,
Their trust may save you from the danger-way—
Your brother's faith in you!

THE GRAIN OF SAND AND THE MOUNTAIN

Nothing's important; what seems of moment great to you
Is naught to all the world beside;
Comparatives will prove the things we see
As looming large, in other eyes are microscopic;
Nothing can matter much—a day, a decade hence
The pomp which awes today, the grief which seems a mountain weight,
The high success o'ertopping all the rest—
Dry up and shrink to nothings in the glare
Of the tomorrow's sun. Nothing's important, nothing great!

Nothing is trivial! What seems of little weight to you
Is big with meaning to another heart;
And relatives reveal the tiny items,—atoms as they look
To you are worlds and universes to these searching eyes;
So, all things matter much! A pebble turns aside two seas;
A tiny scale shuts out the light of living suns,
A tear may drown a soul in scalding, seething woe,

Or one faint smile may save a kingdom's fate;
The little commonplaces scarcely conscious in their doing
Grow easily to character, which in the light
Of heav'n hereafter will be infinite. Nothing is trivial, nothing small!

DIGNITY

I have never walked on stilts. Oh, it may be
I was afraid—for there is danger in the way
Unnatural! I may be dull—you see,
It means an art acquired in day on day
Of practice; and I may be loth
To take the pains or do the work or both.
And while I must admire the marv'lous skill
Of some who thus parade on stilts, I will,
If need be, rather barefoot go,
And smile with those who laugh at me,
Than stiffly elevate my way and so
In walking be less comfortably free.

SECOND-HAND LIVES

He sort o' lived a second-handed life; and so
They rated him accordingly. You know,
There are some folks who borrow every day
Their thoughts in an unconscious way
From those who think, and here and there
Pick up ideas of others—stale or rare;
And soon the world discovers them and sets
A "second-handed" label on them. So he gets
What he is worth himself, this tenant-man,
Living on credit. . . .It's a sorry plan!

ANONYMOUS

The sign above the door
May be no more
Than a distinctive label to assign
Location and identity unto a business. To define
The force that moves, directs and guides
The corporation, vitalizes it,
Gives stamp of character that lastingly abides—
One seeks the secret inner office. There may calmly sit—
There at the helm, the master, quite unknown to fame. . . .
The sign says one thing—it is not his name.

MULTIPLYING HIMSELF

He was an artist, portrait-painter who
Painted one masterpiece, a likeness of himself so true
To his own character that every one who knew
Him said, "Ah, he has put his whole
Life there into that picture—body, mind and soul!"

There was another artist who was true
To his unselfish self, and drew
Pictures of hundreds, men and women, not a few
Of little children, rich and poor;
The beautiful he made more winsome still,
Yet perfect likenesses; and more
Of charm he added to the homely ones, until
Those, seeing any picture that he made,
Drawn to it lovingly, invariably said:
"He put his life, his love, his likeness there
And here and there and everywhere—
To live in these innumerable ways
Through all the years and days."

TRANSFIGURATION

However dark his spirit seems,
However fearsome are his dreams,
No man there is who does not yearn
For moments when the light shall burn
From some supernal midnight sun
Illuminating for the while
With heavenly radiance, like the smile
Of God to baptize life with grace
For days of duties commonplace!

STORM-KINDNESS

Sea-wave rolling!
Sea-bell tolling,
Wild winds screaming 'round the mast,
Good ship driv'n before the blast
On toward the reefs in the swollen tide,
Billows that boom over harm they hide!

Sea-wave rolling!
Sea-bell tolling,
The god of the trident knows just why
The ship must ride on the storm-crest high:
That keel break not on the reef below
Which it could not pass in the calmer flow!

Sea-wave rolling!
Sea-bell tolling,
And we on the main of life must know
There are reefs of death where we cannot go
Unless some high, swift gale shall bear
Our barques over dangers buried there!

THE ROYAL ROAD

One told me that the path to power lay
Along the highway, in the noontide's glare,
With cheering thousands lined along the way
Inspiring hero-effort fine and rare!

Another said: "Not so! the secret path,
The lonely way, untrod, unseen, unknown
Save to the elect—unto him who hath
But inspiration in his heart alone!"

IMMORTALITY PLUS

"What is eternal life?" I asked. And after years,
Years full of faith and hope and fears,
Faith taught, love proved, to me
What it may be:
It is not merely living through
The endless ages yonder; that is true—
It is not all. Eternal life is more
Than never-ending living; it is Life! and, too,
Eternal life is not the mere existing through the endless days,
Not merely living always—but all ways!

PARENTS OF PESSIMISM AND OPTIMISM

Faith and Fear together sat;
I overheard their quiet chat—
About their children—oh, of course,
With mothers that's an endless source
Of conversation. Fear was sad:
"My eldest child is never glad

Nor happy, ever gloomy, blue,
Expecting always to come true
The prophecies of doleful seers—
His children will be little fears.”
But Faith, serene and smiling, said:
“My eldest rarely is afraid
Of things invisible or seen,
He’s always confident, serene,
Enthusiastic, full of joy—
A smiling, active, hopeful boy.”

TRASH AND TREASURE

He once ignored
Me when I claimed
Right to expect
I should be named
Among those whom
He valued high;
He did not pause,
He passed me by;
And yet
This I forget!

Another day
He paused and thought
Simply to say
The thing he ought—
And in the way
Sincere and fine—
'Twas friendship's sure
And sacred sign;
Hid deep,
This will I keep!

THE HOUSE AHEAD

The house ahead stands cold and angular and gray
Beside the traveled way;
There is no glowing fire upon the hearth, no light
Shines out into the night—
A lifeless, soulless thing it is, mechanical,
Inert, material.
The vines no more reach up to kiss the leaning eaves,
The mass of shrinking leaves
Is clambering to escape. . . . Its tenants are the weird,
Bald echoes you have feared,
Themselves nigh-nervous, wild, affrighted, as if they
Were trespassers at bay—
Yet mocking, moaning, challenging by turns, to sigh
At last for days gone by. . . .
And life may be for us, like to the house ahead,
When Love and Faith and Hope are dead.

STYLES OF SORROW

Oh, sister, wear your troubles with good grace—
For there is a refinement of the spirit that
Makes all the difference! The time, the place,
The season, signify the garment or the hat—
And so with sorrows, troubles; there are styles,
And times to wear them; there are ways
Refined or—unbecoming. You may bear them through the
days
Or make them means of beauty to your life;
And there is taste which takes
The troubles commonplace and makes
Of them protection in the earthly strife.

F A I T H

Have they lost faith who once believed in you?
And why?
Because their expectations were too high?
Because you were not true
To them and to your own impulse to try?
Or have they failed to keep in touch
With you? Have they as yet that faith? How much?

Have they lost faith who once believed in you?
Why not?
Because you have quite magnified your lot?
Because you have been true
Unto yourself, nor others have forgot?
Because their faith in you required
Great faith—in them, and in yourself inspired?

P O S I T I V E G O O D N E S S

So many laws, so many rules! And all—
Or nearly all—say: “Don’t!”—till you
And I are quite confused. They do appall!
Then we resent them through and through. . . .
If only some kind law were made to say,
Perhaps by mere suggestion rather than command,
“Do this or that!” we might then understand—
Not threatening a penalty, but in a better way
Just pointing sure rewards and benefits! Oh, say,
I’d be so busy *doing* lawful and constructive things,
In work that joy and satisfaction brings,
I’d have no time—nor interest—to break
Prohibitory laws. . . Then I’d be good for goodness’ sake!

HUMILITY

I heard a good man say
 The other day:
 "Humility is always now
 An attribute of greatness." How,
 I thought, can this thing be? . . .
 Then came to me
 This simple thought,
 So plain I ought
 To have perceived it long ago,
 As you may know:
 "The only men I've ever known
 To stoop were tall; the great alone
 Can humble now themselves, the rest
 Are low and small at best.

LIFE-RULES

I will live my life as if today
 Were the last that I should ever spend
 On earth, with friends and foes;
 As if I knew my way
 Would end
 When down the West the sun in glory goes!
 —but—
 I will live my life, too, as if this today
 Were but the first of many yet to be,
 Many I know are coming, thus: As if the way
 Were only fairly op'ning now to me
 For opportunity to serve and to achieve and do
 My greater work. . . .
 —and—
 So would I be true!

IDENTITY

I met Unhappiness upon the way
One day;
Disguised she tried to be, and masked
She was. . . . I asked
For just one glimpse into her face. . .
With half-repentant, half-pathetic grace,
She raised her domino. . . . I saw
An old acquaintance, Sin. In fear and awe,
I shrank from her; for years ago
I knew her. . . And today, you know!

QUEST AND TEST

I met him on the way one autumn day; the air was cool upon
his brow,
And he was straight and snugly built and big and strong,
Full-blooded, eager, poised and powerful. "And now,"
I asked, "what is your name?" He answered, "Conquest!"
Then,
"Your father's name?" I further pressed. He glanced along
The race-way he had come, wherein were struggling men
Of many kinds. Replied he, "Contest!" . . I know how
Heroes and leaders may be made, and from what circum-
stance, and when.

SWEET SIMPLICITIES

I do not crave a life of mystery,
Of deep-laid plot and tangled history,
Of dark intrigue and web-wove schemes,
Elusive shadows, whisperings and dreams.

Give me but one clear duty to be done,
One honest triumph to be fairly won,
A simple life of clean and open ways,
Of guileless thoughts and cloudless days.

Thus, like a quiet river, free to view,
Runs down a sunlit valley, strong and true,
So let me live above the plottings rife—
Give me the sweet simplicities of life.

TRUTH IN MASK

Once Truth went masquerading, only once in long,
Long years of life; disguised and nom-de-plumed,
And camouflaged she was and yet no wrong
She did. Under the name, "Sincerity", assumed
She shyly went about among her friends who were
Deceived by this light, flimsy subterfuge. She came
At last to one, who, shrewdly recognizing her,
Whispered: "Sincerity!" . . . That was her maiden name!

LIBERATOR

Shackled and manacled I lay, a pris'ner in a cell,
A self-confessed offender; and outside, about,
Around, and overhead was freedom; beauty which no tongue
could tell
Was in the world, while I was bound in doubt
And darkness, till one day before the throne of Liberty
Appeared my advocate; obtained he my release,
And whispered in my ear, "The Truth hath made thee free!"
Then I went forth in paths of happiness and peace.

The sure result of searching—friends or foes—
So, blessed be the doubter; Truth can pass through fire un-
scathed, serene;
And he who questions honestly—he loses naught; he e'en
Confirms his faith; not only so, but more:
He is thus doubly armed and armoured o'er
To battle in the cause of right.
And he who tears false idols down
And rends the curtain Error hung before our sight—
With Truth then holds communion close, and wins a crown
Of confidence complete, with certainty unmixed,
And he in firmer faith is yet more firmly fixed.

PATIENCE, A VOCATION

Unto a life-work I am called. . . I know
Some hear the sacred summons, "Preach!"
Some have been called to go
Into far lands to live and teach
The truth; some have been set apart
For service matching special gift
And grace that may inspire, uplift
And lead men on and up. . . . I search my heart
To find the echo of my calling; there
I find no shining talent fine,
No native large ability of rare
And special sort. . . . Do I despair
Of finding duty in my life? Is mine
To be a barren stretch? . . . And while
I wait, a gentle call comes clear,
Distinct, and personal: "Abstain from guile
And malice, envies, evil thoughts, and, hear!
Accept now Patience as a life-work high,
Yea, difficult—thus failure evermore defy!"

SAY THIS TO ME

When I have done with pencil and have pushed my work
aside,
When He shall read my proofs, approve the things that will
abide;
I hope that one who knew my life in all the busy days
Can say: "Oh, he was thoughtful in the little things all
ways."

I shall not trouble then about the greatness and the fame
I might have wrested from the world to make myself a name,
If only one who intimately knew me through the days
Can whisper: "He was thoughtful in the little things al-
ways!"

UNSEEN: REAL

Soul-blindness long I suffered; till one day
The great Physician, Truth, came down my way
And touched my eyes with healing clay;
Then, dimly first, then clearer as the light,
The great philosophy broke on my sight. . .
I saw that only unseen things are permanent and sure
And things invisible alone always endure.



JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO
ABOUT VARIOUS THINGS



JUST A-VERSE-OR-TWO ABOUT VARIOUS THINGS



THE PERFECT DAY

It has been said, "There are no perfect days." That is not true;

There is one day superlatively perfect—if such term may be
Used to describe one absolutely ideal day; for though
There never has been one in all the years and years ago,
Not one which met the measurement in full entirety,
There is one just ahead, Tomorrow! With its roseate hue
It dawns in glorious undreamed promise; it is then
Our purposes are realized, our plans completed, when
Our hopes are fruited and our visions are transformed;
Tomorrow we shall win the fight, the heights we stormed
Shall be our vict'ry-ground; tomorrow we shall do
The great things we intended, all the good deeds and the true,
The brave things and the little acts of thoughtfulness,
The loving, sympathetic words which cost a breath or less
Will all be said tomorrow; habits which have thrall'd
Us through the years—that we had planned to break—
Will be discarded then; and all the tedious tasks which palled
Us we will essay gladly, zestfully, most joyously to make
Accomplishment a pleasure; on tomorrow, too,
Forgetfulness will be forgotten, all the things we willed to
do—

We shall have done—Tomorrow! . . . But the sore, pathetic
truth

Intrudes: The Perfect Day, Tomorrow, never comes, for-
sooth!

THE SHATTERED VIOLIN

(From an old story)

“Make for me, skillful workman, a violin excellent,
Carefully wrought and finished, a perfect instrument—
Workmanship, wood, the finest that ever were known to man,
And spare neither cost nor labor to match the master’s plan,
For I must play for the king today. Here, take these golden
coins for pay!”

Thus spoke the old musician. The choicest woods were
sought,
And month on month unceasing the patient workman
wrought,
And never in all the work-shops nor all the marts of man
Was violin so nigh perfect, so near to the master’s plan—
No eye could see where a fault might be—from every flaw
’twas accounted free.

Then came the old musician to test the instrument,
To find if he had all finished the violin excellent;
He drew the bow but lightly across the strings, and, lo!
But harshest discord answered the tender touch. And, so,
With angry frown he cast it down and shattered it from
bridge to crown.

“Try yet again, oh, workman; find rarer wood, and take
More time, more pains, more patience, a finer one to make.”
Years passed. The old musician came yet again to test
A violin yet more precious, the costliest and best;
And as he drew his bow so true across the strings ’twas then
he knew—

His cherished wish was granted; the notes divine that fell
’Woke all the sweet emotions, and wrought a magic spell;

He held at last his treasure, the violin excellent,
Carefully wrought and finished, the perfect instrument!
“Now I shall play for the king today; here, take this wealth
of gold for pay!”

The workman gazed in wonder, refused the shining gold,
And spoke to the old musician: “This last is but the old,
The shattered, broken violin—a remade instrument,
Carefully mended, finished—the violin excellent;
And you shall play to the court today the tenderest, sweetest,
perfect way.”

L'Envoi

So are our lives, discordant and out of tune with truth,
With God and brother spirits and duty and love, forsooth;
Ofttimes when crushed and shattered by tribulations sore
Then Faith builds of the fragments still better than before,
And we may see more perfectly to make our lives a Harmony!

THE COMMON DESTINATION

They turned aside, these two—
One and the Other—from the way
They walked one day
As they
Both followed fine Ambition. For they heard
Another's word,
High Aspiration's—as a call;
And they abandoned all
Their cherished plans that they
Might this New Call obey.

Their paths diverged. One went
This way, intent

Upon a fellowship inspired
By Wisdom gray
And knowing; bent
Upon the purpose which had fired
His heart. . . This youth
Went
Seeking Truth!

The Other followed Art,
And consecrated all his heart
Devoted, fervid, pure,
Unto the mission sure
Of finding Beauty rare!

And, after decades, there
Upon the heights
They met. By different ways
They had toiled upward through the days
To high achievement, but to realize
Two dreams—One Image! For their eyes
Beheld one most desirable, but One
The object of their common quest!

For there is none
Who comes into the kingdom of the blest,
This land of excellence, but learns
That Truth and Beauty differ most in name,
In nature they are known always the same!

PATRIOTS TWO

Two patriots there are. One looks
Back to the far past, and, buried in his books,
Revels in radiance of the times that were,
Is proud of all the glory that enshrines

The founders, heroes, pioneers who, scorning fear,
Built up a nation. . . . And another reads
The future by the present, sees the signs,
And seeks the needs that must be met
To square the debt
This generation owes now to the past,
An obligation to be paid at last,
Not to the pioneers and founders, but to those
Who will be born in years to come. . . . And if I chose
Between these two, I would be one of those who see
Real duty in the task supreme of building well,
Upon foundations ready-laid, for children yet to be.

HOLY GROUND

“Here’s sacred ground!” . . . You heard that said
When some association hallowed sanctified a spot;
There, one you loved is buried; here, the red
Blood of the patriot, steeped in sacrifice and hot
In purpose; there, the old home stood; and near,
A famous statesman spoke undying words; while here,
Some other deed made “sacred” by the great,
Good thing the very earth. . . . But we may not forget:
All soil is sacred! From its warmth the very life
Of plant and animal and man comes forth, and back
Unto the mother-earth, when all the restless strife
Is over, Life returns—to come again! . . . The track
Of time, the record of the ages old, is writ
In rock and soil and sand; the secrets deep
Of all the universe are hid down in the earth. . . . So, it is fit
And proper that in rev’rence we shall keep
The soil sustaining! With sanctity the Earth is crowned—
All soil is sacred and all earth is holy ground!

PERSPECTIVE

I stood close to the painting where my cheek almost had
brushed

The canvas; for I was foolish and believed the nearer view
Was better. . . I saw what? . . . A splotch quite meaning-
less, a blot

Of color with no form, design, nor plan; the roughness where
the paint had crushed

Upon the surface, leaving ridges and unevenness. . There
was no true

Concept, no beauty, purpose, idea—nothing but an inept spot.

I drew away, back rods away; the little patch was lost in one
Broad vision of the Picture; that little patch had been a tiny
bit of stone,

A little detail of the perfect whole. I saw the roadway wind
Through vista-ed forest toward the blue beyond; the clouds
behind

The dimmer hills; the broken gate-way in the foreground,
and the cot

Half-hidden in a wealth of vines, inside the flowered yard
. . It lay,

A masterpiece before me, rich, complete, and perfect in its
tone,

Its shading, detail, finished in design—a vital picture done
In exquisite, artistic skill, consummate in perfection, lacking
naught!

And so it is with life: . . One little space of conduct of my
brother seems,

Because he is so near to me, an unsolved mystery of nothing-
ness and fraught

With no intent, but full of imperfections and of faults. . .
 One day
I shall stand back, years back, and view his whole life in the
 beams
Of the eternal sun of years and see its fine design completely
 wrought
As one whole composition, beautiful, symmetrical, entire and
 true
To the great concept which had planned and shaped it
 through and through.

EMANCIPATORS

LINCOLN

He had been held the incarnation typical of all
The spirit of America, that nation which had heard the call
Of real democracy, of freedom for all men of every class
And race, the one alone, of peoples in the living mass,
All creeds and colors. He was in the place of leadership back
 there
When bloodiest war of ages broke—to liberate a handful bare
In one small corner of one nation. So he lives serene
Through all the years immortal for the service he had seen.

WILSON

But now another type is cast. A nation ten times grown
In soul and body has produced in leader now alone
The incarnation of this spirit that shall bring,
Out of the blue infinity on eagle's wing,
A larger liberty unto the race—not to a little group—to all!
Who are enslaved wherever they, oppressed, may call
For real emancipation. Through the ages yet to be
He shall be known the Great American who made men free.

MEAN EXTREMES AND EXTREME MEANS

It's Ne Plus Ultra and Ultima Thule a-running the race
these days,
A-piling a radical record up in divers and devious ways;
In every department of human life, endeavor and search and
fight,
It's Ne Plus Ultra that's pitted against the Ultima Thule all
right!

In art, in science, it's Ultima Thule and Ne Plus Ultra's
field,
Bizarre the method and fad's the means the freakish crop to
yield;
For the cubist's daub is a bid for praise in the picture that
shows the worse,
And the claim for fame and its prize supreme is made by the
libre verse.

In Fashion's realm do the two contest till both extremes are
met,
And the altogether's common—quite!—so far are the stand-
ards set;
The speed's revealed of the race that's run 'twixt Ne Plus
Ultra now
And Ultima Thule in the styles of dress, in which they are
worn, and how.

From the ball-room gay to the temple gate the Marathon
stretch is laid,
And preacher and priest shout favorites on with a frantic heat
or staid

And sturdier urge, till the cults and creeds, the systems and
doctrines new,
Unbaked, unborn, grotesque and raw, successively bulge into
view.

From the kirk away to the capital the race-course lies, and Ne
Plus Ultra strains to lay the length “ ’tween Ultima Thule
and Me’—

Each to outstrip the other in some newest, newer -ism—
A realer, real reality of the super-radicalism.

Till the flocks and floods of the views advanced for ruling the
land become
A Babel of fierce confusion in the total mass and sum—
For round the world and back again is the frenzied race for
rule,
’Twixt radical Ne Plus Ultra and the rabid Ultima Thule!

THE TAX DECEIVER

At the Country Store

“I’m purty well fixed, boys, I swan, ef I do have to say
It fer myself. Now, that thar farm o’ mine ’ud sell today
Fer fully ’leven thousan’. My! that bottom strip is fine;
They’s forty acres, jes’ las’ week surveyors run the line;
An’ then they’s fifty acres more of uplan’, rich an’ gray,
An’ half a hundred timbered heavy—lumber’s up, they say—
I’ll tell the worl’, I’ll show my han’ this year with hosses,
too—

That mare o’ mine’s a wonder, they’s no tellin’ what she’ll
do;

An’ that thar three-year-ol’ is jest the peartes’ critter out,
An’ them two mules I bought las’ fall is beaunts beyon’ a
doubt;

They cost six hundred an' a half; an' that young Jersey cow
 (She's registered) she's givin' jest about five gallon now,
 Weighed every day; an' butter, la! hit's yallerer 'n gol';
 An' say, you orter see my shotes—they's ten nigh three
 months ol'—

I 'low they'd fetch a ten-spot each; an' cotton! w'y I've got
 Jest twenty bales o' las' year's crap; an' corn, I guess I'll not
 Run half-way down the crib. The bank says: 'Jones, we'll
 shorely soon

Be borryin' from you! you haven't drawed sence 'way las'
 June.'

I cackilate I've got the purties' home for many a mile—
 I'm pow'ful well contented—independent fer awhile!"

At the Courthouse.

"So you're the tax receiver? Well, I come ter give in mine;
 But I'm so plagued poor an' times has been so hard I fin'
 They's mighty little ter return: I guess my little patch
 W'd sell fer four per acre, maybe two more at a scratch;
 An'—lemme see! they's twenty acres bottom overflowed,
 An' twenty-five or thirty—I declare I never knowed
 Azackly jest how much they was; then thar's the uncleared
 lot

All over-growed with scrubby pines an' black-jacks, like as
 not

Hit wouldn't sell fer taxes. Yes, I've got one crippled
 mare—

She's blind—I guess that twenty-five on her'd be more'n
 fair;

Then thar's two mules—they're undersize—I s'pose the pair
 'ud sell

Fer nigh a hundeed and a half—that's doin' powful well;
 One cow—I'd value her at fifteen dollars; lot o' shotes—

Jest set 'em down at eight; no cash, no mortgages ner notes;
Household an' kitchen furniture—it's cheap an' worn an'
old—

Jest put hit down at twenty more; I never had no gold
Ner silver ware, ner jewelry, ner guns. I guess that's all—
It's hard times fer us pore folks, winter, summer, spring er
fall!

SAYS TOMMIE, SIX

i got a littel bruther too allready, he
's the teeniest, weeniest littel Scrap
You ever saw; he's just 'bout half pass three
Months old. say, He was sleep in mommer's lap
the other day en still as everything
en Nall at wunst just every littel wile
He'd kinder smile
'thout waking up; nen mommer'd sing
rite soft To Him, an he
just kep on sleeping.

Aunt marie
she saw him smile, an she
Just carried on! an said "oh My!
the darling's dreaming! praps
He members somethin beautifull; oh, I
am Shure he has a vishun!" 'nen she taps
my mommer on the shoulder.

"May Be" she goes on
"he's thinkin now of pleasant sites
in heavun or In somewheres fore he's bo'n—
praps more'n a hundred Yeaes ago—
we cannot know,
it's sure some pleasant memmery delites

him as He dreams”.

yes, that’s
ezackly what she saide, did aunt marie.

you See,
she never had no babies in her life—
w’y, she
ain’t even no man’s wife
till Yet
You bet.

but Grammer, when she Sees
my Littel bruther sorter smile
so curous wile
He’s sleepin, she’s
reel difrunt; she Putts on her specks
an zamines him, an nen She sais to me
“go tommie, fetch the Parregorrick an a spoon;
as Soon as Scrap wakes up weel dose him; it uffecks
them allways thattaway; ive never seen
one smile like That a-sleeping that it didnt meen
he’s going to have the collick”

an my Grammer knows—
she’s had about a hunderd babies. Nen I goes
to get the Parregorrick.

say,
does lolypopps give Babies collick? cause one day
i let my littel bruther suck my lolypopp a Littel wile—
an nen, gee whizz, you orter see Him smile!

“BLESS YOUR HEART!”

Ever notice how that sounds, that “Bless-your-heart!” ex-
pression, when it’s said by some good soul who’s seen the
finer part

In you, and means it as encouragement, with half-surprise
that you have done so well, a little better than expected
—you could tell it by her eyes?

Ever have a sort of consciousness suppressed when she said,
“Bless your heart!” that you should have been pushing
right ahead

And done your best long, long ago? And, say, you know,
there’s meaning mightier in just that saying trite than
you have ever quite

Appreciated! Accent’s on the “Heart”—that’s where
the good intentions come from, rare, unselfish impulses,
and some

Of those fine inspirations that result in deeds of service and
of sacrifice! No matter whether there are needs

Of body, of material wealth, or commonplaceness in the in-
tellectual quality, so there’s something to connect

That heart of yours up with the hunger of the poor old
world! Just so your *heart* is pure and clean and fine—
it’s more

Than any other blessing he or she—or anyone—can e’er im-
part—what’s meant in that warm, cordial “Bless your
heart!”

HAPPY MEDIUM

Just an ordinary fellow, born the ordinary way,
Had the colic, cried, and fretted,
Then was good, was coddled, petted—
Was brought up from day to day just the ordinary way!

Just an ordinary fellow, grew the ordinary way,
 Lived, and soon was grown, and married,
 Then grew old and gray, and—tarried—
 Till he died one autumn day just the ordinary way.

Just an ordinary fellow—wasn't brilliant any way;
 No one ever said, "He's witty!"
 No one thought him great—the pity!—
 Wasn't rich, but lived his day in the ordinary way!

Just an ordinary fellow! Why did thousands love him, pray?
 Just because he won them gently,
 By his quiet love, intently—
 He had won them day by day—just the ordinary way!

EMENDATION

The little sister's eight years old, the little brother younger;
 Her thoughts run much to curls of gold; and his—the boys'—
 to hunger.

And so when she announced, "I'm eight", her grammar just
 to sweeten,
 He warned her—with his features straight: "You orter say,
 'I'm eaten'."

THE FAILURE?

In every town I've ever known, lived Bill! The business men
 Had poor opinion of his business sense, ability and such
 In cold financial matters; time and time again
 He'd tried—and failed; sometimes by bankruptcy, but much
 More frequently he petered out. In politics he took
 A fli'r or two—ran once for alderman and got, I think

It was, some thirty votes. The pious church folk shook
Their solemn heads discussing him protracted-meeting times
 he'd shrink
From steady-keeping-at-it as a convert; always went
Up when a proposition called for those who once enjoyed
Religion but had fallen by the way. "Oh, yes," they said, "he
 meant
The best, but——" there the sentence failed. And they em-
 ployed
About the same remarks in social, intellectual, way
In sizing up Bill's status. . . Now Bill's dead. . . There's
 not a day
Somebody doesn't miss him. Never was a man called into
 service often as was he
To act as pall-bearer. And sing! in every concert, in the
 choir
Of every church, no matter which, it used to be
They knew he'd take a part—just any part—without a pen-
 ny's hire.
The "Old Field School" called him for teacher; then the
 boys
Began to organize the "Local Greys"—and he must drill
 them; then
The Annual Conference met in his home town; one of his
 joys
Was being chairman of the board of entertainment, meeting
 trains,
And greeting visitors, and spending days in service—free—
While others found no time to give. He'd take the pains—
And half a day—to paint a banner for the folks to see:
"Baraca Class Invites You All to Meet With It!" And
 goodness knows
How many nights he's sat beside some sick one, when the
 scores

Of others, duty-bound to watch, were sleeping sweetly. Those
Were some few of the hundred things he did; he never had
the time from chores
Done for the town to get right down to business for himself
. . . And so,
They said he was a failure! All the same, I'd like to know
That when I slip away some day, I'd have, stored up and still
Accumulating, treasures yonder like the wealth awaiting Bill!

“ALL RIGHT!”

I asked Old Partner recently, “Well, how d’ you do today?”
His answer set me thinking; it was what they always say,
And yet the more you ponder it the more there is in sight—
He answered just what you would answer, briskly said: “All
right!”

Two words; eight letters! You can say it in a breath, and yet
Are volumes of significance all bound up when you get
To reading it and poring it—the breadth and length and
height
That may be full unfolded in one’s brief reply, “All right!”

“All right” in body? Is your health in prime condition now,
Your respiration, circulation and digestion? How
Are they? in perfect trim? Are there no defects out of sight,
Insidious ills elusive? Is your body now “all right”?

“All right” in mind? Are you convinced by scientific test
There are no quirks, deficiencies? Your reason’s at its best?
Your memory never-failing? Intellectual? Are you bright?
You never make mistakes of thought? Say, can you swear,
“All right”?

"All right" in soul and spirit—and in attitude and poise?
"All right" in open life and secret thought? If one employs
That common little echo to a "Howdy!", it's a sight—
The things he says and doesn't say in answering "All right!"

TEXT AND PRETEXT

"The sermonizing's easier in these driving days," he said—
The parson, as he figured in his note-book. Then he read:
"First Sunday, Good Roads sermon; second, Y. M. C. A.
speech,
On the third, it's 'Plant a Garden'—by a reg'lar scheme I
preach.

"Then fourth Sunday, I'm expected to slip in an urge on
Thrift,
On the next give Prohibition and its benefits a lift;
Next on 'Law and Order' generally I'm scheduled to exhort,
With a special extra night discourse on Civics, bright and
short.

"And soon there's Pay-up Week and I am asked to take a text
On 'Tribute unto Caesar!' Let me see—what drive is next:
There's Mother's Day and Father's Day and Children's
Day, of course—
There's three more Sundays cared for with no chance of
getting hoarse.

"Then Clean-up Paint-up Week comes round, I'm asked to
give the hour
To boosting that one Sunday in a sermon full of power;
'The Fight Against the Great White Plague' 's a subject
that's assigned
Another Sunday; 'Swat the Fly!' 's another one, I find.

"I'm asked, 'Please do devote one day to Better Schools', and
then

Another to a plea for Starving Europe—so that when
Fifth Sunday happens now and then, I feel I simply must
Wedge Home and Foreign Missions in, to be quite fair and
just.

"Then if the Early Shopping talk toward Christmas tide per-
mits

I may have time, December days, to rouse my pious wits,
Defy the civic schedule for one Sabbath in the year,
And preach a Gospel Sermon for my hungry flock to hear!"

AN' A PRINCESS COME

I've thought a heap about the big things Miriam done—
She's Moses' sister, maybe you'll remember. Well, on one
Bright day down in the swamp 'longside the river Nile
She set a-thinkin'. "Watchful waitin' " was her style
O' work—a-minding Moses as he lay, a little baby-scrap,
Really too young to be off thar away from mammy's lap—
But hid, for "obvious reasons", as they sometimes say,
In that thar curious contraption of a basket, wher' he lay
Amongst the tall bull-rushes. And—Miriam a-tending him!
I think she must 'a' been a timid gal, an' slim
But wiry, keen-eyed, an' all wropped up in that thar bud o'
her'n.

I never had no notion that she'd ever heerd the stern
Decree o' Pharaoh—she was thar fust an' foremost jest to
keep

The crocodiles from gittin' him—so he could sleep
An' grow. . . An' while she minded off the crocodiles
Along a Princess come! You know the rest, the miles

That Moses led them Chosen Tribes, the laws he writ—
They've lasted till today—the mark he made; you study it!
Well, all that never would 'a' come about, ef she
Had not been thar to mind the crocodiles away, an' see
That Moses should be safe . . . And so, I 'low there's some
Big store that we should set by doin' common duties well—
A-watchin' Moseses to keep the crocodiles away, she couldn't
tell
What minute, while she watched, some Princess mightn't
come!

THE SCHOOL

Here stands the School—a monument, not to the past,
Not to the heroes of the days that were,
But to the future generations at the last,
The hero-patriots of the coming year
And age. The higher, finer, better reared
This monument, the higher, finer, better is to be
The Citizen who in the coming days will see
His duty to the state, and do it well. You fear
For safety of the future? Keep the school and teacher true,
And then support them, prove your faith in them, and do
What may be needful then to keep them free,
Free to give service; and the bright'ning years ahead
Are full of promise for the land, and doubt and dread
Of evil fade. But give them scant, unwilling help, and know
The State's best friend is slighted, lights of liberty burn low!

EPITAPH

He warn't so many when hit come to looks,
Fer he wuz tough;
He warn't no 'count in books,
Fer whut he never knowed, hit wuz enough!
An' manners? Ef he ever
Had 'em, w'y, they never
Broke out on him here.
He wuz jest "Bill". But not a man
Ez ever pulled a trigger did he fear,
An' never wuz a han'
Th'owed truer rope. . . .
Well, years he lived up ter his shack,
'Cept when he come to Hellton special days;
An' when he cantered back,
They knowed he'd been thar! He could raise
More heck when some fresh guy got in the game
An' worked a frien' o' his'n—then he wuz a sight!
Hit wuz the same
A-workin'—he done that with all his might. . . .
Naw, I can't say as Bill wuz 'good'—
I wisht I could—
An' him a-lyin' thar with clods piled on his heart—
But, by the Livin', Bill he done his part,
An' done it like the whole blame worl' depended on jest him;
Bill wuz a di'mon', that he wuz, a mine full of 'em ter the
brim! . . .
Say, when you plant that monyment on Bill, don't write
No high-falutin' tommy-rot; you might
Jest h'ist hit white an' tall
An' carve: "He done his damn'dest"—an' that's all. . .
Fer, sart'in-shore
No gol-dern angel couldn't do no more!



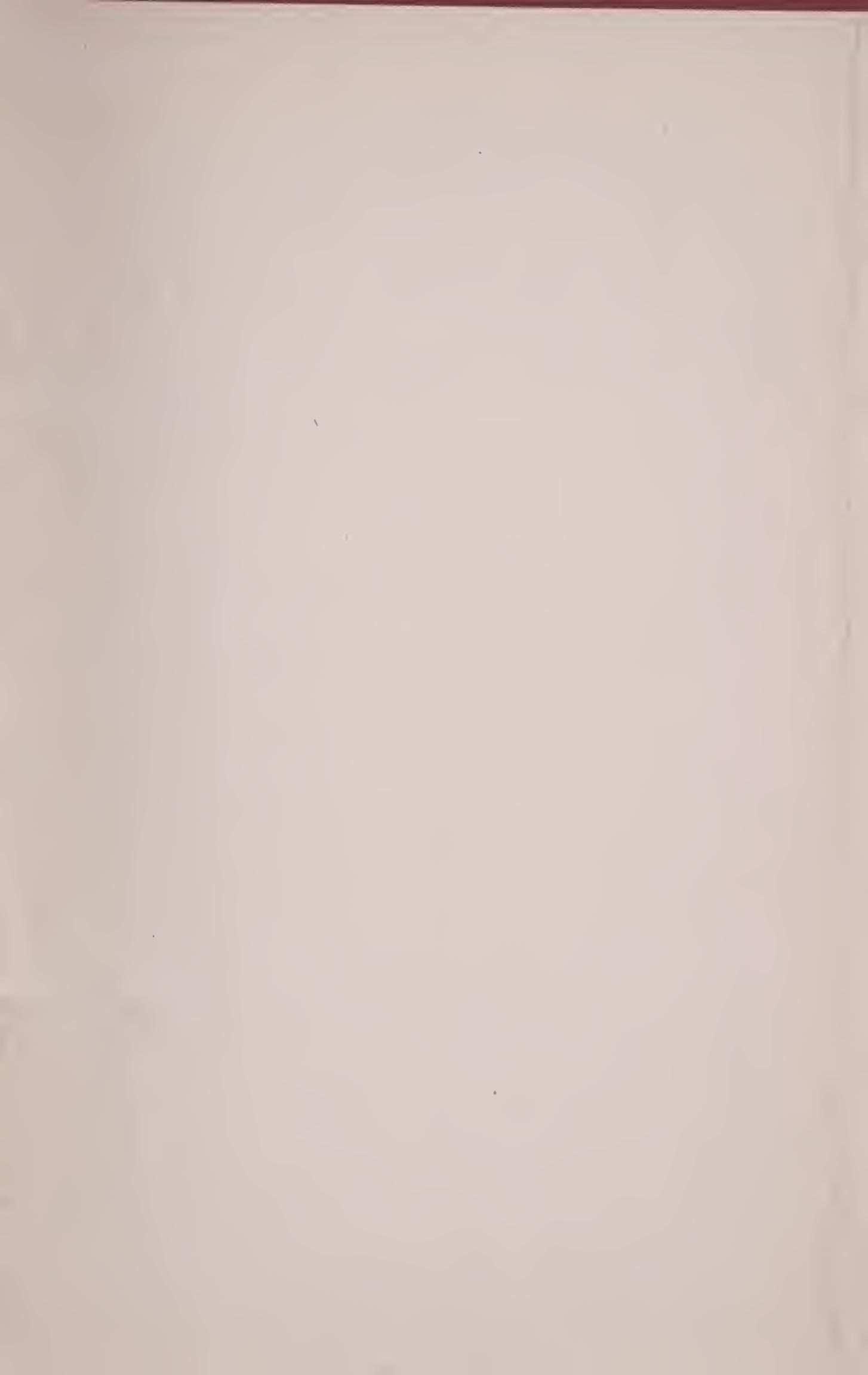




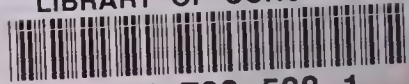
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